

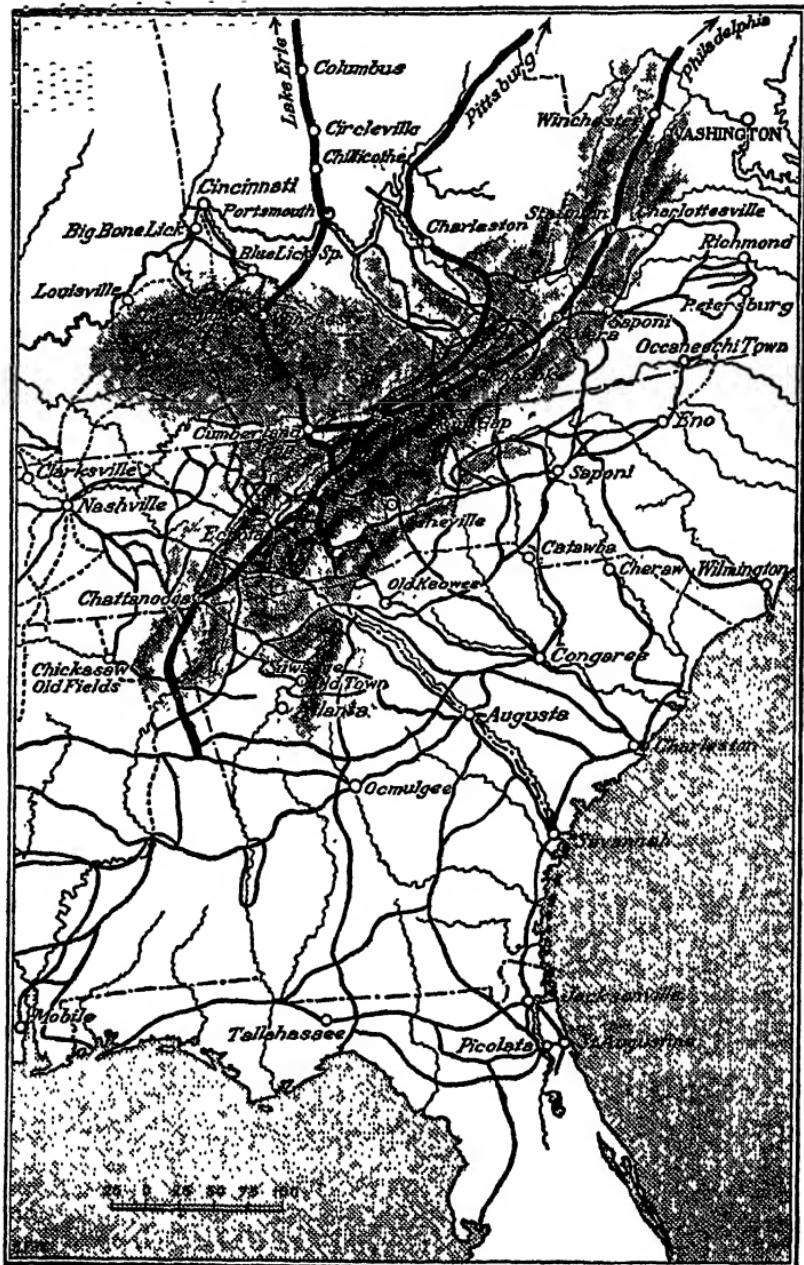
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Hear Me, My Chiefs!



THE WARRIORS' PATH

HEAR ME, MY CHIEFS!

By HERBERT RAVENEL SASS



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HEAR ME, MY CHIEFS!

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BY HERBERT RAVENEL SASS

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FOR

MARION

Foreword



“HEAR me, my chiefs! My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”

These words of Chief Joseph, spoken when his last battle was lost and the end had come for his people, supply the name and in a measure suggest the motive of this book.

Therefore Joseph comes first in it; that tragic cry of his will ring through all its pages. Yet it will not be a lament for the lost cause of the Indian nor a catalog of his wrongs. There is another reason why we shall do well to listen when the Indian cries to us, “Hear me, my chiefs!”

He has a story to tell—a story of terrific drama in a scene of unsurpassed wonder. It is a story unknown to most of us. Nearly always, when the tale of the frontier is told, whether by the historian or by the novelist, its theme is the white man’s conquest of America. The

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theme of this book is the Indian's defense of America—and the splendid unspoiled America which he defended.

That is an unfamiliar viewpoint. We shall find ourselves following not the well-trodden paths but some that have been overlooked or perhaps forbidden by custom because they lead to ugly spectacles which we have preferred to forget. The book, however, is not a history of the Indian's struggle to keep his continent. That struggle is the background against which Christian Priber plans his Republic of Paradise and Tsali gives his life for his people and Sauts the Bat rides to his death. Because these names are strange to you and you have never heard of the Emperor Brims or the Cherokee Removal or the journey of the four Nez Percés in search of Jesus of Nazareth, this story of the Indian and his America has been written.

H. R. S.

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Hear Me, My Chiefs!

CHAPTER ONE

Joseph: A Symbol



AT ABOUT one o'clock in the morning a trooper of Brevet Colonel Perry's command struck a match to light his pipe. This was contrary to orders, and Captain Trimble reprimanded him sharply. The man muttered that he hadn't understood the order, but he would probably have been disciplined later if he had lived.

The bright, small flare of the match, lasting only a moment, was no more than a pin-point of fire in the immense blackness over Idaho; yet to Lieutenant Parnell, on edge and anxious, it seemed as disastrous as a rocket would have been. Ten seconds after the match was snuffed out, a coyote howled on the hillside above. This passed almost unnoticed, for coyotes were common. Afterwards, Parnell seemed to remember something queer about the final notes of that long, mournful howl.

Five hundred yards away, at the entrance of White

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Bird Canyon, an Indian picket, slouching motionless on his pony, jerked to attention as he heard the coyote's cry. Head thrown back and cocked on one side, he listened intently; then, as the last quavering notes came to him, he wheeled his horse and faded into the deeper blackness of the canyon.

At the other end of White Bird Canyon, where it opened into the valley of Salmon River, the most remarkable man in the West waited for two events which he expected that night.

This man was an Indian also—an Indian chief. Thirty-six years of age, tall, straight and handsome, with a mouth and chin resembling Napoleon's, he had given no hint, as yet, of the dangerous genius smoldering in him. His name was In-mut-too-yah-lat-tat, which meant Thunder-Rolling-over-the-Mountains. To the white settlers of Idaho and eastern Oregon he was known as Joseph, chief of the Wallowa band of Nez Percés, a tribe which had always been friendly to the whites and had several times come to their aid when they were few and weak.

This had been forgotten when the white men became many and strong. "If ever a tribe was worthy of fostering," Captain Trimble wrote later, "it was the Nez Percés, but no recollection of former service could stand against the white man's greed." Gifts and cunning per-

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suasion had induced the other chiefs to sign away their lands, but the Wallowa band clung to their lovely valley between the sinuous Snake and the swift Grande Ronde. It was their home. In its soil their ancestors lay and, Indian-like, they held it sacred. "I buried my father," Joseph told the white commissioners, "in that beautiful Valley of Winding Waters. I love that land more than all the rest of the world."

They didn't care why or how much he loved it. They wanted Wallowa and meant to have it; so they twisted a dubious treaty to suit their purpose and told Joseph and his people to get out. Granted that civilization must march onward, no man today defends the record of outrageous wrong, including wholesale robbery and wanton murder, which at long last stung the wholly peaceable Nez Percés to madness. Joseph strove desperately for peace, even consenting, as a last resort, to give up Wallowa to the whites. Then, when he and his band had already left their Valley of Winding Waters, new injuries inflamed some of his young men beyond endurance and, without his knowledge, they struck back, avenging blood with blood.

Joseph knew then that the war which he dreaded was upon him. Where the White Bird flows into the Salmon in western Idaho he pitched his teepees, posting his pickets at the entrance of White Bird Canyon,

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for he knew that Perry's troopers from Fort Lapwai were already on the march. That night of June 16, 1877—the night when a careless trooper struck a match to light his pipe—Joseph was resting quietly in his lodge with his wife and his twelve-year-old daughter, waiting for two things: the birth of another child (his wife being very near her time) and the hoof-beats of an Indian rider coming in haste down White Bird Canyon with news that the soldiers were at hand.

The child was not born that night, but the rider came.

Near the entrance of White Bird Canyon, where the howl of a coyote had been heard but scarcely heeded, Colonel Perry halted his command to wait for daylight. The soldiers—two troops of the First U. S. Cavalry, with a number of volunteers—whispered and grumbled, humorously. Perry, once more going over the plan of attack with Captain Trimble, found his mind slipping queerly back to an occasion in '64, when the Eighth Corps, with whom he had served, had been jumped out of their beds by Gordon's Rebs at Cedar Creek. If they could jump Joseph's camp like that . . . Lieutenant Theller was thinking about his wife at Fort Lapwai; he had been married only a few weeks. No-

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body, except perhaps Lieutenant Parnell, remembered the coyote that had howled a short time before.

Promptly, with the first light of dawn, Perry got his little army on the move. The canyon, very narrow at first, widened and flattened as it slanted down toward Salmon River; when the light of the rising sun streamed over the high ridge to the east, the troopers could see the glint of the river in the open, treeless valley below.

A sergeant lifted his hand and pointed. Near the river, columns of smoke were rising straight and thin in the still air. These marked the site of the Nez Percé encampment, the lodges themselves being hidden by the unevenness of the ground.

No Indians were visible. It seemed likely that Joseph had been caught napping.

That, however, was not the case. Unknown to Perry, a strange thing had been happening. It had been happening in Joseph's brain. He had never fought a battle and knew absolutely nothing about war. Yet, as he stood that morning with his younger brother, Ollicot, and White Bird, another chief, on a knoll close to the encampment and watched Perry's column winding down the opposite slope toward the valley, a faculty of his mind, hitherto unused and unsuspected even by himself, sprang into instant and brilliant action.

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The terrain before him became to him what a chess-board is to a master player; he saw that he had only to move his pawns thus and so to win the game. Brusquely rejecting another plan proposed by White Bird and Ollicot, this man who had never fought a battle designed a battle flawless in every detail. He gave his orders to his two lieutenants quickly and confidently. Then he walked down the knoll, mounted his horse and rode to the spot which he had selected for himself.

What followed wasn't Perry's fault; he was at grips with one of the most gifted "natural" soldiers that America has ever seen. With half his warriors, Joseph met the advancing troops where the canyon opened into the valley. He held them there through some minutes of hard fighting until White Bird gained a position assigned to him on Perry's left.

Joseph's plan was perfectly co-ordinated, perfectly timed. As White Bird appeared on the left, Joseph extended his line to turn Perry's right. Then, driving a herd of loose horses before him, he charged at the head of his warriors, as White Bird's yelling horsemen thundered down on Perry's flank.

The result was immediate and decisive. In a few minutes, Perry's battle was lost; almost at once it became a badly broken-up retreat. Joseph skillfully drove

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a wedge between Parnell's troop and Perry's, holding the former to the floor of the canyon, forcing the latter upward along the side of the bluff. Captain Trimble rallied his men, checking the Indian advance for some minutes, but Joseph's warriors cut off Lieutenant Thel-ler and eighteen troopers, driving them into a blind side-pocket, where they perished to a man. Parnell led a gallant charge to rescue another squad that had been cut off. They saved all except two, who were shot from their plunging horses, but as Parnell and his men streamed up the canyon in a wild gallop to overtake the fleeing main body, the retreat became, for a time, a rout.

Out of the canyon mouth, where by a lucky chance Perry and Parnell re-established contact, they raced pell-mell to recover and re-form in the more open country and grimly hold the red warriors in check. But they were fewer now, for more than a third of their total force had been killed, and presently Joseph found a knoll commanding the position and forced them out, driving them before him again. He pressed the pursuit to within four miles of the town of Mount Idaho; then, giving strict orders that none of the bodies should be scalped, he raced back to the Nez Percé camp.

As he entered his lodge, he heard the cry of a baby.

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In the hour of this, his first victory, the child had come.

There was a time, after the White Bird Canyon battle, when Joseph could sit before his lodge in the June sunshine and watch with grave, contented eyes as bright-shawled women from the other teepees came to fondle and admire the baby girl who had just been born. But this interval was brief. To Washington and to the military posts of the West the telegraph carried the news. A lion was loose in the Idaho hills. The First Cavalry had ridden out to round him up and had been badly clawed. . . . Ten days after Perry's defeat, Joseph's scouts brought him word that General O. O. Howard, seasoned veteran of the Civil War, had started from Fort Lapwai with an overwhelming force.

Again that faculty of Joseph's brain which had long lain dormant and unused awoke to swift activity. Now not only the valley of the Salmon but all the rugged Idaho and Oregon country between the Blue Mountains and the Bitter Roots became a chessboard upon which he must play a game. Howard was too strong to be crushed as Perry had been crushed. This problem required a different strategy.

Joseph made his opening move with unerring judgment. Waiting until Howard had almost reached the

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valley, he led not only his fighting force but the women and children and his herd of two thousand horses and hundreds of cattle down the Salmon a few miles, crossed it and took up a position in the mountains on the other side of the swift stream, whence he could strike in any one of several directions.

Howard was in a quandary at once. If he pursued the enemy with his whole force, he would leave the settlements unguarded. He did what Joseph meant him to do—divided his army.

He detached a force, under Major Whipple, to move toward Cottonwood; then he crossed the Salmon to attack Joseph. The latter, drawing Howard well into the rough mountain country, circled round him, recrossed the Salmon and cut Howard's communications. Then he marched swiftly across Camas Prairie to strike Whipple before Howard could learn where he was.

His strategy was largely successful. A detachment of Whipple's force, under Rains, was destroyed; another force, under Captain Randall, was badly cut up. Whipple himself was surrounded at Cottonwood and heavily attacked. Not a bit too soon, Howard, discovering how completely he had been outmaneuvered, recrossed the Salmon in hot haste and came racing back to raise the siege. Joseph drew off in ample time to reach the

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Clearwater, where Looking Glass, another Nez Percé chief, awaited him.

The busy telegraph wires had another tale to tell then: the lion that had used his claws in White Bird Canyon had also the cunning of the fox. In the face of a much larger and wholly unencumbered army, Joseph had struck his enemies in detail, beaten them handily and then effected a junction with Looking Glass, thus considerably increasing his strength. It was a piece of generalship recalling Jackson's famous Valley campaign, though, of course, on a miniature scale.

Then, on the banks of the Clearwater, Joseph conceived a plan of extraordinary daring. He resolved to fight Howard himself.

He had probably two hundred and fifty—certainly not more than three hundred—warriors armed with rifles. Howard had four hundred fighting men, nearly all of them Regular cavalry and mounted infantry, with a howitzer and two Gatling guns. Joseph's picturesque camp, with its tall cone-like teepees sheltering the women and children, was pitched beyond the Clearwater in a position well-adapted for defense. But he had no intention of fighting a defensive battle. When Howard approached the Clearwater, Joseph led his warriors across the river and instantly attacked.

It would be hard to find in military history a bolder

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stroke or one more skillfully executed. Incredible as it seems, Joseph with his much smaller force held Howard in front and at the same time outflanked him, actually reaching his supply train in the rear, disabling some of its animals and very nearly capturing it. Equally incredible, he held his much stronger enemy completely on the defensive throughout a long day of hard fighting, so that when night fell the troops occupied a circle with the Nez Percés all around them and with all their communications cut.

These were United States Regulars, brave men, fully equipped, adequately led. They had the advantage of both numbers and position. Yet, in this amazing Battle of the Clearwater, dawn of the second day found them actually besieged, busily strengthening their defenses, searching the horizon anxiously for help. If help had not come by a lucky accident, there is no telling what would have happened. Shortly after noon, a dust cloud was seen in the distance—a fresh column of cavalry coming from Fort Lapwai—and when this reinforcement reached the scene, Joseph broke off the battle.

Again the telegraph wires had a tale to tell, an astounding tale to those who could read between the lines. With a greatly inferior force, Joseph had fought a brilliant offensive battle against Regulars supported by artillery and had come very near to accomplishing

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the impossible. It was a small affair, of course, measured by the numbers engaged, but, for boldness of conception and for skill of execution, Joseph's fight at the Clearwater has probably seldom been surpassed.

And yet he must have known—this Indian who, perhaps, had something of Napoleon in him—that he had missed his aim. If he could have beaten Howard utterly on the Clearwater, he might conceivably have obtained for his valiant little band a peace which would have given them back their home. That probably was why he had risked a pitched battle against such enormous odds. He must have realized now that their Valley of Winding Waters was lost to his people forever.

He called a council of his lieutenants—Looking Glass, White Bird and Ollicot. He knew what the white man's telegraph was doing: undoubtedly every available military unit in the West was moving toward Idaho. They were coming from Montana, from Arizona, from California, even from far-away Atlanta. Sorrowfully, Joseph agreed that there was but one thing to do—retire across the Bitter Roots and across the Great Divide of the Rockies and try to reach Canada.

Then began the most astonishing chapter of all. Hemmed in by enemies outnumbering him at least eight to one—with Howard behind him, with Gibbon

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and Sturgis on his flanks, with Nelson Miles in front —his little army, burdened with more than three hundred and fifty women and children, fought its way onward for ten weeks over a distance of nearly fifteen hundred miles with a dogged valor which few armies have ever surpassed.

Again and again during that long agony Joseph displayed, in General Howard's phrase, a military genius "not often equaled in warfare." Again and again he turned on his pursuers and sent them staggering back. Throughout he fought one of the cleanest wars that have ever been fought. The Nez Percés, General Sherman wrote when the struggle was over, "displayed a courage and skill which elicited universal praise; they abstained from scalping, let captive women go free, did not commit indiscriminate murders of helpless families, which is usual." At Big Hole Pass, Gibbon, coming in from Montana, struck the sleeping Nez Percé camp at daybreak, pouring a destructive fire into the teepes, killing many women and children as well as men, including Chief Looking Glass. Joseph rallied his warriors, whirled on Gibbon, captured and dismantled his howitzer, and might have annihilated his command, but for Howard's approach.

He was lion and fox in one. Often it seemed that they had him, but always he outwitted or outfought

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them and kept going. Near Henry Lake, he lashed back at Howard so effectively that the latter was paralyzed for three days, because Joseph had captured most of the army's pack-animals! Across the corner of Wyoming he went, releasing unharmed, despite the slaughter of the Indian women and children at Big Hole Pass, two white women who had fallen into his hands; then into Montana, where Colonel Sturgis intercepted him with a greatly superior force. In a hard two-day battle he beat off this new foe, leaving Sturgis so shaken that he could pursue no further.

Then, when his magnificent retreat of nearly fifteen hundred miles was all but accomplished, when he had beaten Howard and Gibbon and Sturgis and left them far behind, when the Canadian line was barely forty miles away, Fate turned against him. He had no telegraph to warn him that from Fort Keogh, far over on the Yellowstone, still another army was hurrying to cut him off. Almost within sight of safety, he had pitched his teepees and was resting his weary men and horses, when Nelson Miles struck him with a fresh force of Regulars more than double his own.

Joseph's wife and the baby who had been born on the day of his first battle had been with him throughout the long retreat. That morning he had left them in his lodge and had gone with his twelve-year-old daugh-

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ter to inspect the horse-herd, a short distance from camp. A number of others, both men and women, were there also, looking for their mounts. It was the last day of September, the ground white with snow, the air bitterly cold. Suddenly, Miles' cavalry dashed into the Nez Percé camp, cutting off the horse-herd from the teepees.

Joseph gave a rope to his daughter, bidding her catch a pony and go with the others. He flung himself on a mustang and raced toward the camp. Bullets ripped his clothes and the horse was hit, but miraculously he got through. Somehow—heaven knows how—he rallied his warriors; and somehow—again the thing seems a miracle—those weary men beat off that attack, beat it off with such heavy loss to the soldiers that Miles did not charge again.

There was no need to. The lion had been brought to bay at last. He still had claws and his lion's heart, but he was hamstrung; with nearly all his horses taken, Joseph could not slip out of this trap, as he had slipped out of so many others. Miles surrounded the position, brought up his cannon, and began to shell the camp.

There was one hope for the trapped lion: that Sitting Bull and his Sioux, refugees in Canada, might come to the rescue. But Sitting Bull did not come. Ollicot was killed. White Bird and a small party stole through the

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lines in the night and safely crossed the border. Joseph could have gone also, but he refused to abandon the women and children and the wounded.

For four days they held out, their number now reduced to eighty-seven men, forty of whom were wounded, guarding three hundred and thirty-one women and children, shielding them as best they could from the bursting shells, shivering in the awful cold, eating the flesh of dead horses. Howard joined Miles, and the two white chiefs offered the red chief honorable terms—terms offered in good faith, but afterwards conveniently forgotten by those “higher up.” On the fifth morning, this Indian, who had waged war as few white men had ever waged it, spoke these words to Howard’s messenger:

“Tell General Howard I know his heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. He who led the young men [Ollicot] is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. Hear me, my chiefs! My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more, forever.”¹

CHAPTER TWO

A Wind Blew West



PERHAPS Joseph should not have come first in this book. He is, in point of time, the last great figure to move across the stage set here. But for that reason he brings the drama near to us, and, because he is near, it is easier to feel and understand in him something that runs through the whole story and gives it meaning.

Take him, then, as a symbol of what the book tries to be—and as a pledge that the tale will not lack action. And now go back four hundred years to its real beginning.

A wind blew west over the Atlantic, driving before it a frothy foam or scum. It blew this scum, which was evil and unclean, upon the shore of the American continent and the scum took form. The form that it took was that of a white man—of many white people, both

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men and women; wherever the scum lodged on the shore of the continent, it took this form.

That was how the white men came to America, according to Tenkswatawa, the Shawano prophet, who pronounced this opinion when the white men had been on the continent about two centuries. Perhaps it was no more fantastic a theory than that with which the earlier and more innocent Indians deluded themselves—that the bright-faced beings brought by the westward-blowing wind were gods.

The belief that they were gods was soon abandoned—reluctantly, because the red men, in common with most other peoples, had long looked forward to the coming of a messiah, and at first it seemed to them that he had come. To the southward the Spaniard promptly began his spectacular and bloody deviltries; at the other end of the long coast-line the English were quick to show the Indians what to expect. The second Englishman to explore the New England coast—Captain George Weymouth, who set sail from Devonshire on Easter Sunday of 1605—treacherously kidnaped five Indians and carried them away with him; and a little later Captain Thomas Hunt enticed a much larger number (probably twenty-four) on board his ship and took them to Malaga to be sold as slaves.

Thus, at practically the first contact of red man and

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English white in New England, the latter set a precedent for which in later years the Indian would be heartily damned. When, much later, Indians raiding the frontier settlements carried off white prisoners to their villages in the forest, they were only doing on a much smaller scale what the white men had already done and had long been doing to them. Much has been written of the sorrows of these white captives—whose lot, however, was not always hard—and the grief of their relatives. The Indian side of the picture is less frequently exhibited.

“There was an old [Indian] woman,” wrote one of the early New England chroniclers in 1621, “whom we judged to be no lesse than an hundred yeeres old, which came to see us because shee never saw English, yet could not behold us without breaking forth into great passion, weeping and crying excessively. We de-maunding the reason of it, they told us, shee had three sons, who when master Hunt was in these parts went aboord his ship to trade with him, and he carried them Captives into Spaine, by which meanes shee was deprived of the comfort of her children in her old age.”

Hence, if at first the New England red men shared the belief of the Southern nations that the white newcomers were heavenly beings, their very earliest experiences with the whites must have shaken that belief.

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Gods would not lure sons and wives away from mothers and husbands and sell them into slavery across the sea. Gods would not poison the clean American air with deadly diseases never known there before—plagues like the one which, in 1616 and 1617, virtually destroyed the Massachusetts tribe and filled the Indians with such terror and loathing of the white men (whom, quite correctly, they held responsible) that when, three years later, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth no Indian dared go near them. Nor, when the strangers had established themselves and taken a grip upon the land, could the red men discover anything particularly godlike in their behavior.

It seemed not unreasonable to the Indians of the Wessagussett region that their head-men should protest against the repeated robbery of their homes and the alleged violation of their women by certain lawless white men. But when they ventured to protest, somewhat vehemently no doubt and perhaps with threats of reprisal, Captain Miles Standish lured the chief ones among them into Wessagussett blockhouse and murdered them with bloody thoroughness, himself giving the signal for the slaughter and with his own hands stabbing the leader to death. Then, after hanging an Indian boy for good measure, the admirable Standish cut off the head of one warrior against whom he held

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a personal grudge and carried the trophy with him triumphantly to Plymouth.²

This was in 1623, less than three years after the coming of the *Mayflower* and long before the Indians of New England had begun to fight for their homeland. When at long last they did begin to fight, there was much complaint about their methods, and their savagery is still a favorite theme. Few know that in the terrible wars of the white and the red in New England it was Captain Miles Standish of honored memory who set the fashion of treachery and savageness—good Mr. Longfellow's honest Miles Standish, who wasn't content with the scalp of his enemy but preferred to have the entire head.

So, swiftly, all along the coast to which the westward-blown wind had brought the bright-faced strangers, the naïve illusion that they were celestial messengers sent to bless and uplift the red nations gave way to a conviction that they were spawn of the Evil One come to curse and destroy. From Mexico where Cortez—unsoftened by his beautiful Indian mistress—wallowed in blood, to New England where Standish deliberately and as a matter of policy set himself to prove that the white man was “more stealthy, more deceitful, more ferocious” than any Indian, that conviction grew wherever the white men established themselves upon the

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soil. And as the grim realization of what confronted them spread among the red peoples, emphasized by the white men's insatiate lust for land, here and there in the forest painted and feathered sachems and chiefs, bolder and more far-sighted than the rest, began to dream a dream.³

Sassacus was probably not the first to dream it. Before him, Powhatan dreamed it in Virginia; but Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas, whose real name was Matowaka the Playful One, was married to a white man, and this held Powhatan's hand. Sassacus, chief sachem of the Connecticut Pequots, was the first on the New England coast who tried to translate into action the dream that was henceforward never to fade wholly out of the Indian's heart—the dream of driving into the sea whence they had come the pale intruders who had proved to be not gods after all but demons more terrible and more powerful than any that the red men had ever imagined.

Sassacus struck in 1636 when it had become plain that the Pequots must fight or be driven from their homeland. The result was death for himself and ruin for his people, few of whom had better weapons than bows and tomahawks. Surprised in their stronghold—a circular palisade enclosing some seventy thatch-cov-

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ered wigwams closely crowded together—to which the white men set fire while the Indians slept, more than six hundred Pequot men, women and children were, in less than one hour, roasted to death or ruthlessly shot down as they tried frantically to escape from the flames.

“God is over us!” Captain John Mason exclaimed as he sniffed the sweet smell of the Pequots roasting. “He laughs his enemies to scorn, making them as a fiery oven.” It was indeed a grim day for the “heathen,” one of the great massacres of Indians by white men for which there is no parallel among the massacres of whites by Indians. Since most of the slain were burned to death in the flames which made the enclosure a hell, good Dr. Mather seems to have been in a double sense correct when he recorded gratefully: “No less than 600 Pequot souls were brought down to hell that day.” He should have added a note that only two white souls ascended to heaven. In other words, only two white men were killed in the “battle,” which fact affords a very clear idea of how much chance the luckless Indians had.

Opechancanough was among the first to dream the dream. He was a brother of Powhatan, whom he succeeded as chief of the Virginia Algonquins in the region around Jamestown, and in 1622 he launched an attack

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against the settlement. It fell short of its aim and finally, in 1644, when he was past ninety years of age, the increasing encroachments of the English convinced him that if the red men wished to keep their land of Virginia, they must destroy the white enemy before it was too late.

Opechancanough must have been a remarkable man to plan so ably and strike so powerfully with such a weight of years upon him. He came very near succeeding this second time. But he failed, and when, in the end, he was made prisoner and was brought before the Jamestown Governor—so old and tired that he was virtually helpless—a guard needlessly shot him to death.

He has a far better claim to the title of patriot than the much-lauded Massasoit of Massachusetts who owes his dubious fame to the fact that he was for many years the white man's dupe and tool. Massasoit saw his mistake before he died at the age of eighty—he should have seen it much sooner—and left to his son, Metacomet, known to the white men as King Philip of Mount Hope, the task of clearing the land of the aliens who, if they were not destroyed before they became too strong, would destroy the Indian race.

Philip waited ten years. He was not a bloodthirsty man and he had friends among the whites of whom he

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was genuinely fond.⁴ Moreover, he knew that the task ahead of him was no small one, thanks to Massasoit's long and disastrous quiescence. So he waited and planned and worked, striving to form a confederacy of all the New England tribes. As it happened, he was forced to strike before he was quite ready, an outrage⁵ perpetrated by the whites upon the wife and child of one of his allied sachems helping to precipitate hostilities. But the war that he fought to save the red man's continent for the red man was the most important effort of the kind undertaken on the North-eastern seaboard.

It lasted nearly three years and for a time the fate of white New England hung in the balance. It was waged ruthlessly on both sides, there were massacres by both white and red, the latter duly and luridly recorded in our histories, the former generally passed over in silence. The greatest slaughter was that visited upon the Narragansett tribe when a deserter showed the white men how to gain access to the Indians' fortified village in the heart of a deep swamp.

The Indians defended the palisade stoutly, inflicting serious loss, despite the inferiority of their weapons; but when once the white men gained the enclosure, effective resistance seems to have broken down. "The grim and wrathful Puritan thought of Saul and Agag and spared not," wrote John Fiske; "the Lord had

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delivered up to him the heathen as stubble to his sword." As stubble he mowed them down that Sunday afternoon until more than a thousand men, women and children were killed in this one Indian town—a figure which dwarfs the white casualty lists in such celebrated affairs as the Deerfield massacre, for instance.

The Narragansett sachem, Canonchet, escaped, only to meet death later on. Captured and told that he would be executed, he replied that "he liked it well; that he should die before his heart was soft or he had spoken anything unworthy of himself." These words, reported by his enemies, were surely bravely spoken—the sort of defiance which, uttered by a white warrior, might win him wide fame. Indeed Chief Canonchet had fought with such bravery that even to the Ipswich pastor, William Hubbard, the bitterest Puritan chronicler of the war, it seemed that "some old Roman ghost had possessed the body of this western pagan."

The disaster to the Narragansetts was the beginning of the end. Famine assailed the Indians, inducing many of them to join the white forces in order to find food; and this, with the white man's superior weapons, finally proved decisive on all the fronts. Philip, the brain of the Indian combine, was hunted down at last and surrounded at Bristol Neck by a force headed by Captain Benjamin Church. A traitor guided the white men to

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the chief's refuge and in the brief fight that followed another renegade shot him through the heart.

Captain Church—a mild man compared with some of the preaching zealots who made the warfare in New England doubly horrible—then had the chief's head and hands cut off and his body quartered. The four parts of the body were hanged upon as many trees, the head was carried to Plymouth where it was shown upon a scaffold for many years, one hand was sent to Boston for exhibition there, while the other was given to Philip's slayer “to show to such gentlemen as would bestow gratuities upon him, and accordingly he got many a penny by it.”

Thus died Metacomet, Massasoit's warrior-son, commonly called by the white men King Philip of Mount Hope, who was killed, quartered, and scattered over New England because he had fought—savagely, but no more savagely than his white enemies—a hard fight for his people and the land that rightfully belonged to them. Church and some at least of the other soldiers would have let the matter rest there, but the terrible Bible-quoting fanatics were not yet content.

Among the captives, when the war had ended, was discovered a nine-year-old Indian boy who was recognized as Philip's son. It was suggested that he be sent with the hundreds of other captives who were being

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shipped to the West Indies and Morocco to be sold into slavery. This, however, smacked too much of softness toward the heathen. One clergyman reminded his hearers that "the children of Saul and Achan perished with their parents, though too young to have shared their guilt"; and Increase Mather pointed out that "though David had spared the infant Hadad, yet it might have been better for his people if he had been less merciful."

The question whether or not to kill the boy was debated long and vehemently and the Bible was ransacked for bloody precedents. No spectacle of naked savages in the forest exceeds in horror this demon-dance of the wild-eyed, brimstone-breathing zealots around that helpless Indian lad, the while they flourished God's Book and proclaimed it authority for the child's cold-blooded murder. Finally, when the public thirst for gore had been somewhat slaked by the execution of a dozen of Philip's lieutenants, it was decided to sell the little fellow overseas as a slave.

Sassacus, Opechancanough, and Philip—these had dreamed the dream and were dead. The pale strangers, welcomed at first as visitants from heaven, had broken the Indians' strength and taken their lands in New England and Virginia, and in those regions the dream

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of driving them into the sea was done. But farther south that dream was not yet wholly a fantasy.

Brims of Coweta, known as Emperor of the Creeks, the ablest man in the South of his time, undoubtedly dreamed it. In 1715 he completed a strong confederation of Southern tribes against the Carolinian English and launched a war that nearly wiped out Charlestown.

Brims, an astute wilderness statesman, to whose importance the historians have done scant justice, had played Englishman, Frenchman and Spaniard against one another, and the ultimate objective of his diplomacy and of his war has not been recognized. His stroke was nothing less than an attempt to destroy the English power in the South; and so formidable was it that, when the blow fell upon Carolina, something like panic spread all along the Atlantic coast even as far north as New York, for signs were not lacking that the Creek Emperor's messengers had been active among the Northern tribes.

If Charlestown had fallen, the Northern English settlements would have been gravely imperiled, while Brims himself would almost certainly have moved next against his temporary friends, the Mobile French and the Florida Spanish, to clear the South of all white men. But Charlestown, though hard-pressed, survived the stroke, largely because she had a gallant and able Gov-

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ernor, but principally because the powerful Cherokees of the Southern mountains, after wavering for weeks, turned dramatically against Brims and gave the English their aid.⁸

So this effort failed also. Though the war cost the Carolinians heavily in blood and treasure, almost destroying the Province, it was followed by no such bloody reprisals as those which had virtually exterminated the New England tribes—the Carolinians being somewhat less committed to the extirpation of the heathen for the glory of God. But it cost the Yemassee, who had been the spear-point of Brims' attack, their lands, and it carried the white frontier in the South nearer to the mountain barrier of the Appalachians. It was the last great armed effort of the red man to stop the white invader in the Atlantic coastal plain and drive him back across the sea whence he had come.

Later, when the white tide creeping inland from the coast had begun to beat against the rampart of the Blue Ridge, another man, the most interesting of all and yet almost forgotten today, would dream the dream—the same dream that Opechancanough, Philip and the rest had cherished, yet a far greater dream than theirs. When he, too, had failed and the white tide was rolling on across the mountains, Pontiac, the famous Ottawa chieftain, and then Tecumseh the Meteor with his

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brother, Tenkwatawa, the Shawano Prophet, would rally the tribes of the midland valley and wage two wars in the hope of driving the invaders back across the mountain wall and keeping the rest of the continent for the red men.

This dream also would be blotted out in blood. The wars of Pontiac and of Tecumseh, important though they were, are a familiar story which need not be repeated here. The white newcomers, who were neither heavenly beings, as the early Indians had believed, nor poisonous "scum of the Great Water troubled by an evil spirit," as Tenkwatawa the Prophet taught—these pale-faced, insatiable, conquering men who were civilization's vanguard would sweep on across the midland valley, across the Mississippi, to the Plains. There, as the Plains nations struggled to keep their lands, more wars would be fought until in the Western mountains Chief Joseph—whose genius might conceivably have made history if Fate had not withheld it until too late—would announce the Indian's surrender to implacable Destiny; and still later, in the Dakota hills, the last bloody chapter would be written at Wounded Knee.

This is not a history of the wars of the red and the white. Here those wars are simply a background against which certain figures move and certain episodes are enacted, while simultaneously the virgin America of the

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red man undergoes a great and tragic change. But before we can go farther with that story, involving characters and episodes for the most part little known and strangely neglected, it is necessary to consider the America of the red nations and the red nations themselves.

CHAPTER THREE

Children of the Evening



THE next thing to do is to make a map in your mind —a map of what is now the United States.

On the part of it which we call New York State write the word *Iroquois*. Over an immense area, including New England, most of the Middle Atlantic States and nearly all the territory between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi north of Tennessee, write the word *Algonquin*. With the Great Smoky Mountains as its center, draw an oval including northern Georgia, the western Carolinas, eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama, and label it *Cherokee*.* South and west of this oval, across a broad rectangle extending from the lower Mississippi to the Georgia and South Carolina sea-coast, write the word *Muskhogee*. Block out a vast region on

* The Cherokee were a branch of the Iroquoian stock which, at an unknown early date, migrated southward. They are so important in their own right that they are given separate mention.

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the prairies and plains from Wisconsin to Wyoming and from Arkansas to North Dakota and label it *Sioux*. Take Nebraska and eastern Texas out of this Sioux empire and label them *Caddoan*. Mark out a wide oval chiefly west of the Rockies, beginning close to the Texas coast and extending as far as northern Oregon, and name it *Shoshoni*. Draw an irregular parallelogram, including eastern Arizona, most of New Mexico and western Texas, and label it *Navajo-Apache*.

This will give you a rough but serviceable “political map” of what is now the United States as it was when the red men held the continent. It does not designate individual tribes, for these were too numerous, but it locates in a general way the great Indian families or stocks of which the tribes were subdivisions. It is not complete as to details, for there were other less important stocks, and there were Sioux “islands” in the Algonquin territory and a large Algonquin “island” in the empire of the Sioux. But it will be helpful to the reader to whom Indian names are nothing but names and who has only the vaguest idea as to where the different red nations were established when the curtain rose upon the American drama.

Now, with this map before our mind’s eye, let us begin—not at any of the usual starting-points, but with a serious mistake made by M. Samuel de Champlain.

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M. Champlain, exploring in the general region of the lake which bears his name, joined forces with certain Indians who were at war with the Iroquois, and, as a result of this, the Iroquois shaped the destiny of the North American continent for centuries to come—shaped it in a way disastrous to Champlain and his Frenchmen. When, in the year 1609, Champlain chose the wrong side in a quarrel between Indian nations, he roused against France the lasting enmity of the Iroquois League. And it was largely because the Iroquois League became the ally of England and not of France that the former won the long struggle for possession of North America, and the United States of America are what they are today.

What was this Iroquois League to which we probably owe the fact that when we turn on our radios of an evening the announcer addresses us in polished English instead of equally polished French? It was one of the most amazing things that ever existed in the Western Hemisphere. What it was is less amazing than what it tried to be; and this latter, though little known, is one of the most dramatic facts in the whole story of the Indian.

The Iroquois, as a glance at our map will show, were not a numerous people. The territory which they held originally was small compared with that of the Algon-

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quins, for instance, and their tribes were comparatively few. But, somewhere toward the middle of the sixteenth century, long before Champlain appeared upon the scene, there arose among them a leader who must surely be considered one of the greatest Indians that ever lived in North America. Haionhwatha (He-Makes-Rivers), generally shortened to Hiawatha, was a very different man from the hero of Longfellow's poem. The poet, perhaps through no fault of his own, confused the real Hiawatha with a mythical hero of a totally different nation—the Ojibways—with the result that the poem contains nothing relating to the Hiawatha who actually existed.

To that real Hiawatha, incredible as it may seem, there came, nearly four hundred years ago when all America was a wilderness, the conception of universal and everlasting peace. What planted this dream in the breast of a Mohawk warrior can never be known, but it seems certain that another Indian, Dekanawida by name, shared his vision and helped him in his great work. For years he labored at risk of his life among the warring tribes to make his dream come true, and at last a measure of success crowned his efforts. A Grand Council was held, probably about 1570 or somewhat earlier, to which the Mohawks, Onondagas, Oneidas, Cayugas and Senecas sent representatives. At this meet-

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ing, undoubtedly one of the most important ever held in America, the Iroquois League, generally known as the League of the Five Nations, was born.

The astonishing thing about it was its purpose. "The underlying motive," says J. N. B. Hewitt of the Bureau of American Ethnology, "was to secure universal peace and welfare among men by the recognition and enforcement of the forms of civil government." To that great end Hiawatha planned with extraordinary wisdom, and the system which he devised is described by D. G. Brinton, a foremost authority on Indian history, as "one of the most far-sighted, and in its aim beneficent, which any statesman has ever devised for man." It was to be, says Horatio Hale in his study of the Iroquois, "not a loose and transitory league, but a permanent government. While each nation was to retain its own council and management of local affairs, the general control was to be lodged in a federal senate composed of representatives to be elected by each nation. . . . Still further, and more remarkable, the federation was not to be a limited one. It was to be indefinitely expansible. The avowed design of its purpose was to abolish war altogether."

This is a hard thing to believe—that hundreds of years ago, when there was probably no white settlement in eastern North America (certainly none north of

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Spanish Florida) American Indians, supposedly the embodiment of brutish savagery and notoriously cruel in war, formed a league of nations for the abolition of war and the establishment of universal peace. Yet it is true. Nor is its significance lessened by the further fact that Hiawatha's dream was realized only in part.

From the day when the first Grand Council was held and the League was born, the Five Nations were friends instead of foes. That in itself was no small gain and to that extent Hiawatha's plan succeeded. But the Federation which he formed to usher in the reign of everlasting peace became, after his day, the greatest war-machine that America had ever known.

Yet this, perhaps, was inevitable, a necessary step toward the desired end. In the America of that time peace had to be enforced, and the Iroquois League was in process of enforcing it upon the surrounding Algonquin tribes when the coming of the white man interrupted the process. From the Ottawa to the Tennessee and from the Kennebec to the Mississippi the Federation was supreme and was steadily extending its sway.

What would have happened, one ethnologist has asked, "if Columbus' ships had turned back, if no other adventurous sailor had found the New World, and if the Indians could have had these last five hundred years to shape the continent's destiny? Would the powerful

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Iroquois Confederation have continued to conquer and weld together tribe after tribe until there was an Indian United States?" Conceivably, that might have happened. And if it had happened, Hiawatha's dream of peace, for the Indian world at any rate, might have come true.

The unshaken friendship of the Iroquois for the English, the result of their hostility to the French, has been called "the great central fact of early American history." It was not only a potent factor in deciding the contest for empire between England and France; it also kept the Iroquois from lending their powerful aid to any of the red man's early efforts to stop the white advance from the Atlantic seaboard. Absorbed in their warfare against the French, they left other and less able tribes to oppose the more dangerous enemy; and this in the end was fatal to them.

The League of the Five Nations—which became the League of the Six Nations, when the Tuscaroras were admitted in 1726—belongs mainly to colonial history. When the United States had become a nation, and for many years thereafter, the Indians whom the white man knew best were, in the North and Middle West, the tribes of the great Algonquin family and, in the South,

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the Cherokees and the Muskhogees, especially the Creeks.

From the Algonquins, perhaps more than any others, the common and often erroneous conception of the Indian arose, and to this great stock, more widely diffused than any other in the United States, many of the most famous tribes belonged: Delawares or Lenapes, Mohicans, Massachusetts, Pequots, Shawnees or Shawanos, Miamis, Sacs, Foxes, Pottawattomies, Chippewas, and numerous others. King Philip, Sassacus, Powhatan, Opechancanough, Pocahontas, Pontiac, Tecumseh and Black Hawk were all Algonquins. Dominated for a long time by the Iroquois, they regained their morale with the decline of the League's power after the Revolution, in which most of the Iroquois aided the British.

With certain tribes of Iroquoian blood, especially the Wyandots, the Algonquins became the most formidable barrier to the white man's advance in the North; while in the South the Cherokees, the brave mountaineers of their race, dwelling amid the peaks and foothills of the Appalachians, and the Muskhogees played from time to time a somewhat similar rôle. Of the Muskhogee nations, the Creeks, occupying most of Alabama, Georgia and southern South Carolina, were the most important, and the Choctaws of western Alabama and Mississippi perhaps the most numerous. The

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Chickasaws of Tennessee, most warlike of all the Southern tribes, were too few in number to be an important factor in our wars, though they gave the French two of the worst beatings the latter ever suffered in America and cut to pieces an Iroquois force which had invaded their territory.

To tell the story of these and all the other stocks and tribes of the red man's America would require a thick volume. Here we must group them and, for practical purposes, the best plan is to group them in two grand divisions—the “foot Indians” of the East (of whom the tribes already considered in this chapter are types) and the “horse Indians” of the West. It would be hard to say which stirs the imagination more deeply—the painted stealthy warrior gliding silently as the panther through the vast shadowy forest that masked the face of the land from the Atlantic to the prairies, or the wild red rider of the Plains whose horsemanship became the wonder of the world.

Sioux is the most famous name in the story of the Western Indian. There were in the East also certain nations of Siouan blood, such as the Catawbas of South Carolina and the Monacans of Virginia, but the real empire of the Sioux lay west of the “Great River.” Although there were “islands” of other stocks within its boundaries, it may be said to have extended from

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the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains and from northern Texas to the Saskatchewan.

Over most of this wide area the various nations of the Sioux stock—Dakotahs, Crows, Assiniboins, Kaws or Kansas, Mandans, Omahas, Osages, Poncas and others—roamed at will. Living on the incalculable hordes of buffalo, and possessed of thousands of horses, they were the most powerful of the Plains nations, and around them centers much of the thrilling and picturesque drama of the Wild West. To the Sioux belonged many of the most famous Western chiefs, including Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Rain-in-the-Face, and Crazy Horse, and it was the Sioux who enacted one of the bloodiest of Western tragedies when Custer and his cavalry were cut off and destroyed on the Little Big-horn in 1876.

West of the Sioux country the nations of the Shoshoni stock occupied the Rocky Mountains and the adjacent plains from northern Oregon practically to the Texas coast. This stock also extended through Mexico into Central America and included the Aztecs, the Comanches, among the most warlike of all the Plains tribes and probably the finest horsemen, the Bannocks, Snakes, Utes, Mokis, Pimas and Yaquis.

South and west of the Shoshoni, the Apaches and Navajos held a wide territory, the former famous—

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especially, in Chief Geronimo's time—as perhaps the wiliest warriors of the whole Southwest. The Apaches and Navajos were a Southern offshoot of the great Athapascans, the most widely distributed of all the Indian linguistic stocks, holding all of northwestern Canada from Hudson Bay to the Pacific and reaching far up into Alaska.

Of the other better-known Western tribes, the Arapaho and Cheyenne were nations of the Algonquin blood who formed a large "island" in the Sioux territory or between the territory of the Sioux and the Shoshoni along the flank of the Rockies; the Arikara and Pawnee belonged to another stock known as the Caddoan whose lands were also pretty well surrounded by those of the Sioux; the Blackfoot of the northern Rockies were Algonquins; the Kiowa of Colorado and Oklahoma and the Kutenai of northern Montana and Idaho each formed an ethnic group of its own; the Nez Percés of Idaho and Oregon belonged to a stock known as the Sahaptian. Finally, along the shores of the Pacific were found a number of rather small and relatively unimportant tribes belonging to none of the great stocks which held the larger part of the continent.

Whence came these red people, of many tribes but all of one race, who once possessed this whole vast

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country from the Atlantic to the Pacific—these “Children of the Evening,” as we may appropriately call them because now their sun has set? Is it true that the early Phoenicians crossed the Atlantic and planted colonies in the New World, which were subsequently forgotten for centuries? Did ships from ancient Carthage discover and colonize America? Did Chinese junks bring immigrants across the Pacific thousands of years before Columbus’ voyage? Are the Indians the descendants of refugees from the “lost continent” of Atlantis, who left it before it sank beneath the waves? Are they, as many have contended, descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel? Are some of them the offspring of the bold Welshmen who sailed into the unknown West with Prince Madoc about 1170, never to be heard from again?

All these and many other theories have been advanced and supported with voluminous arguments. The Lost Ten Tribes theory, in particular, has persisted for generations; and the Prince Madoc legend is a fascinating story in itself. None of these notions, however, has scientific standing today. Though some scientists believe that man actually originated in the New World, the weight of competent opinion now supports the belief that the ancestors of the Indian came into Alaska from northern Asia.

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It is known that in later times there was a considerable movement back and forth across Bering Strait; the early traveler, Père Grellon, is said to have encountered on the Plains of Tartary a Huron Indian woman who had been sold from tribe to tribe until she reached Central Asia. It is believed that long before this the first discoverers of America crossed over from the Old World to the New, in the far northern latitudes where Asia and America almost join, and where, in the Miocene Age, there had been an actual land connection.

After the first adventurous band undoubtedly came many others; and slowly, century after century, the descendants of these immigrants spread farther and farther south, until not only North America, but South America also, was peopled. How long ago these original discoverers of the New World arrived can only be guessed. Some authorities place the date no farther back than five thousand years. Others believe that, at the very least, twenty thousand years and perhaps much more were necessary to produce the varied types of Indian and the hundreds of different languages which had developed before the white man came upon the scene.

For though the Indians, who probably never numbered more than 1,200,000 north of Mexico, were still

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in the Stone Age (the only certain exception was the Inca civilization of Peru, which had reached the Age of Bronze), the red nations varied endlessly, showing differences wider than those which distinguish the German from the Greek, for instance. Thus, nearly all generalizations about Indians are subject to exception. In one sense the frontiersmen, from whom the common conception of the red man principally derives, knew him well. In a broader sense, their knowledge of him was superficial and imperfect, for most of them knew his dark side only. The modern scientific ethnologist—who is very seldom a sentimentalist—has learned a thousand things about the Indian that the frontiersmen never knew. His dark side is admitted. But compare the common conception of the red man with the picture the ethnologist draws.

“They were a kindly and affectionate people,” Hewitt says, describing the home life of the Iroquois, “full of keen sympathy for kin and friends in distress, kind and deferential to their women, exceedingly fond of their children.” Of the Cherokee, Charles Royce declares that “the unselfishness of his friendship as a rule would put to shame that of his more civilized Anglo-Saxon brother.” Mooney and Thomas of the Bureau of American Ethnology pay tribute to the high character of many of the Algonquin chiefs, among whom

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“Tecumseh stands out prominently as one of the noblest figures in Indian history.” James Adair, a frontiersman as well as one of the earliest of American ethnologists, wrote enthusiastically of his “cheerful, brave Chikkasah [among whom he lived for many years before the Revolution], faithful even to the death . . . kind and liberal even to the last morsel of food.” Among the Western Indians, the Dakotahs (Sioux) and the Nez Percés are ranked with the highest, physically, mentally and morally.⁷

There was wide variation, of course, in all these respects, among individuals as among tribes. The sentimentalist’s picture of the aboriginal red man as invariably a noble and high-minded being until civilization spoiled him is as exaggerated as “the only good Injun is a dead Injun” theory. However, it is certainly true that until comparatively recent times, contact with the white man changed many tribes not for the better but disastrously for the worse both morally and physically, for just as the Indian had developed no immunity to the smallpox and scarlet fever germs which are believed to have come to America with the white man, so, too, he had slight “resistance” to the vices of civilization.

It was the unspeakable tragedy of the Indian not merely to be conquered but to be so changed by con-

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tact with his conquerors that most of his handsome qualities have faded not only from memory but from belief. He was, before that disaster befell him, incomparably the most picturesque savage that the white man has encountered, the finest subject both for romance and for Homeric drama. The Indian warrior in his fantastic war-gear, especially perhaps the Indian of the Plains on the lithe, wiry horse of Arab-Spanish blood which seemed almost a part of him, is a picture to delight the sculptor, as fine a figure of stalwart, clean-cut manhood as any race or age has provided; but that picture has been supplanted in our minds by the Indian of a later time and now we can scarcely believe that it was real.

Yet it was real. The picture has been drawn for us by many who knew him before he was changed, and it is a pity that of late years we have been almost afraid to use, as he should be used in our literature and our art, this splendid and utterly American thing—the Indian warrior. Equally lamentable is it perhaps that we have neglected the opportunity for romance in which the Indian's magnificent wilderness abounded; neglected it, one suspects, largely because we have come to believe that neither beauty nor charm of any kind was ever found among Indian women.

That notion, too, is a fallacy which it would be easy

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to refute by citing the testimony of many trustworthy observers. The fact is that, from the time of Cortez's mistress, Marina, there was no lack of "forest-beauties," as some of the chroniclers call them, to enhance the lure of the free wilderness life to which so many white men succumbed. Indian women were often not only comely in face and form but also intelligent, animated, gay. One of the most widespread misconceptions about the red race is the notion that the typical Indian, male and female, is a peculiarly taciturn, stolid, sullen individual—"a grunt in a blanket," as someone has expressed it. As everyone who has seen Indians in their homes is aware, they are the opposite of stolid. "They are fond of society, gossipy, great talkers, with a keen sense of repartee," said George Bird Grinnell, who knew not a few tribes but many. "In their villages and camps social gatherings for dancing, story-telling and conversation occurred more often than in civilized communities."

One cannot find a better illustration of the extent to which we have misunderstood the red man than the almost universal belief as to the position of woman. We think of the Indian woman as little better than a slave and a drudge, condemned to hard menial labor, while her cruel and lazy lord and master lolled at his ease. This is a misconception of the facts, as ethno-

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logical research has revealed them. Among most of the more important tribes, the labor of the sexes was not unevenly divided, and, as a rule, Indian men "were affectionate fathers and husbands, often undergoing severe sacrifices and privations for the sake of their families."

In fact, if woman's relative position is a test of a people's culture, many of the Indian nations ranked high. Among the Cherokee, Iroquois, Huron and others, lands and houses were owned solely by the women; kinship was traced through the blood of the woman only; every candidate for a chiefship was nominated by the votes of the married women; all chiefs were chosen and all important measures were enacted only with the approval and consent of the married women of the tribe!

We needed a villain in the American saga and, inevitably, the Indian was given the rôle. We had to believe him wholly a devil to justify our own course, and there was enough devil in him to make this easy. He waged war as the savage wages it, and so dreadful was he in war that the specter of him still haunts our racial memory. It is time now to admit that not only was the Indian fighting for his native land against an invader to whom treaties were scraps of paper and the

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solemn pledges of statesmen merely a means of gaining an end, but also that every barbarity practiced by the red man in war was practiced by the white man who fought him, including scalping, the slaughter of women and children, and the torturing of prisoners. Confronted by savagery in our advance across America, we reverted to savagery. The morals of it may be argued, but the fact is an essential part of the Indian's story.⁸

Its end, perhaps, was inevitable; a people still living in the Stone Age could not withhold a vast continent from what we call (a little doubtfully at times) "the uses of civilization." When the sun rose upon the first band of white men, night was at hand for the red, and slowly the darkness engulfed them. If we, who took their country from them, were fighting the battle of progress and enlightenment, all the more reason why we should be fair to a conquered people's memory.

"From Massachusetts Bay back to their own hunting grounds," said Wendell Phillips, "every few miles is written down in imperishable record, as a spot where the scanty, scattered tribes made a stand for justice and their own rights. Neither Greece, nor Germany, nor the French, nor the Scotch can show a prouder record. And, instead of searing it over with infamy, the

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future will recognize it as a glorious record of a race that never melted out and never died away, but stood up manfully, man by man, foot by foot, and fought it out, for the land God gave him, against the world, which seemed to be poured out over him."

There is much truth in that eulogy. The Indian, too much an individualist for his own good, nevertheless fought a good fight, the best fight that any savage race has ever made against the Colossus called Civilization. He was a terrible foeman, but it is questionable whether the methods he employed were more terrible than those used against him. The pioneers who faced and fought him in his wilderness—and it is important to remember that it *was* his wilderness—were a valiant breed, but they were not, in the circumstances they could not be, knightly or chivalrous foemen. Both were pawns in the hands of Destiny. Whether Destiny and God are always one and the same is a question for which the story of the Indian provides no very satisfactory answer.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dream in the Wilderness



SASSACUS, Opechancanough, Philip, Brims the Creek Emperor—all these had dreamed the dream and had failed; the dream that America might be saved for the red man. Before the tide of white conquest had passed the barrier of the Appalachians, another man dreamed that dream; and the dream of this man was greater than that of any of the others, for though it did not save America for the Indian, it has come to life again in our time until now it is shaking the world.

Because he was misunderstood, he has been forgotten. Undoubtedly he is one of the most fascinating figures that have moved in the American scene. Yet in most histories of America you will find no mention of his name, and scarcely one American in half a million has ever heard of him or his astonishing story.

One morning, in his room in London, Mr. Christian Priber looked at himself in the mirror. If he had

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been an easily discouraged man, he might have been depressed by what he saw there. He was small, plump and rather ugly; he had neither the majesty of a Jupiter nor the charm of an Apollo; you wouldn't have said that he was just the man to undertake the remodeling of the world. Nevertheless, that was what he was about to undertake, and perhaps the humor of it struck him, for he smiled at himself in the glass.

That smile transformed him. He was still a plump, kindly looking little man, neither strong nor handsome, but you would have realized now that he did have a certain amount of "personality." It came with his smile and it shone out of his eyes. They were full of courage, humor and shrewdness and yet they had a rapt look in them as though they saw not his own commonplace image but something very wonderful and beautiful.

In a thousand guesses you'd never have guessed what those eyes saw in the mirror.

They saw himself, Christian Priber, transfigured. He was no longer a plump, ugly, futile little man, who had never amounted to anything. He was Prime Minister of a barbaric empire many times larger than England. He sat at the right hand of the ruler of that vast domain, and he was the real ruler, for he told the emperor what to do and the emperor did it.

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England, France, Spain—the mightiest nations of the earth—drew back, daunted, before him; or, if they resisted his demands, the infinite legions of his warriors drove their armies into the sea. And this was only part of what he saw in the mirror.

The greater, more important thing was this—he saw the world metamorphosed, made over by his hand; a world purged of injustice, tyranny and greed; a world in which the poor were no longer exploited and oppressed, but in which perfect liberty reigned and all men and women were equal, free and happy.

All this Mr. Christian Priber, that small nonentity with a smile and courageous, humorous eyes, saw in his mind as he looked at himself in his mirror that last day in London. What makes it important is the fact that much of it was actually to happen; and what makes it interesting to us is the fact that it happened, amid circumstances incredibly dramatic, here in what is now the United States. Christian Priber smiled more broadly and spoke to himself in one of the six languages that he knew.

“Well! little man,” he said, “it’s time to be starting.” A few minutes later he bade his London lodgings good-by and went forth upon his great adventure.

Four thousand miles away across the Atlantic, in an

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Indian village called Great Tellico, a tall chief named Moytoy was sitting before the fire in the village council-house. He was thinking, in all likelihood, about some incident of the war-path or the hunting-trail. Certainly, he was not thinking about Mr. Christian Priber. He had never heard of Christian Priber, and he would have been vastly astonished if he had known that a plump little gentleman of that name was on his way from London to crown him emperor of such an empire as he had never dreamed of.

In Great Tellico there lived, too, a certain Indian girl, black-eyed, copper-skinned, light-hearted, not yet ready to choose among the young warriors who courted her.

Christian Priber had a map. Day after day, as the ship on which he had taken passage plowed its way across the ocean, he studied that map—when nobody was looking. It was a crude affair representing what was known of the America of that time. It showed the few European settlements, most of them on or near the coast, and it showed, rather inaccurately, the boundaries of the more important Indian nations which held the vast interior of the continent.

Of these, the one that Mr. Priber studied most carefully was the Cherokee nation whose country, extending

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almost from the Ohio to the Savannah, included the high peaks and valleys of the Southern Appalachians; and the Cherokee town upon which his gaze rested most frequently was Great Tellico, in what is now Tennessee, just west of the Unaka Mountains and distant some five hundred miles by trading-path from Charlestown in Carolina, the nearest considerable English settlement.

In Charlestown (which was not to call itself Charlestown until much later) Mr. Priber disembarked. He gave his name without hesitation, but during his stay in the little frontier metropolis, perched between the ocean and the wilderness, he had little to say about his plans. They were very clear in his own mind, however, for he had been perfecting them for many years, first in his native Saxony, whence long ago he had been compelled to flee, and then in England. Yet now, when he stood upon the very brink, at the verge of that shaggy Indian-haunted forest in which he was about to venture his life, he may well have paused.

Probably, in the Charlestown taverns, like the Bowling Green House and Charlton's, he heard many a hair-raising tale told by lean, bearded, buckskin-clad hunters, who had come down with their pelt-laden pack-horses over the narrow wilderness trails which led to the Indian lands beyond the mountains. Certainly

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these tales might have terrified a kindly little philosopher well versed in the arts and skillful as a linguist but utterly ignorant of the wilderness and its ways.

But, if they terrified Christian Priber, they did not turn him aside from his fixed design. Presently he took the plunge. He sold everything that he had except a box of books and a supply of paper and ink—you can read the advertisement of the sale in the *South Carolina Gazette* of December, 1735—and vanished in the forest. Probably Charlestown supposed that this was the end of him, and probably Charlestown rather regretted it. He had been a pleasant, harmless, little gentleman, very agreeable to talk to, much given to quotations from the classics, but full of a lively and amusing wit. It was a pity that he should go and get himself scalped.

But Christian Priber did not get himself scalped. Instead, he did an utterly astonishing thing.

He made his dream begin to come true—the dream that he had dreamed before his mirror in London.

He founded an Empire, crowned an Emperor, and made himself Prime Minister. He shook his fist at the Great Powers of Europe and told them to get out of America or he would throw them out. More than that, he began his great task of remaking the world.

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In the heart of the American wilderness, with red Indians as his helpers and with an Indian girl as his mate, he laid the foundation for that ideal State of which he had dreamed for twenty years, that happy republic where perfect liberty and equality would prevail and no man would be richer than his neighbor, that new and glorious commonwealth which would be a light and an example to all the nations of mankind.

How Christian Priber did this is a true tale, so fantastic, so rich in wilderness drama, and yet so pertinent to the mightiest events of today, that the obscurity in which the man remains is matter for amazement.

You remember that, as Priber pored over his map, he fixed his eyes upon an Indian village named Great Tellico; and in Great Tellico, you recall, lived an Indian chief named Moytoy. There was a woman, too, a black-eyed, copper-skinned girl who would have a part in the drama. Priber had heard of Moytoy, a famous Cherokee chief. But undoubtedly he had never heard of the black-eyed Indian girl. She was one of the surprises that Fate sprung on him.

How Priber got to Great Tellico nobody knows. There was peace at the time between the Charlestown English and the Cherokee nation, but there were wandering war-parties of other tribes to be reckoned with

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always, and, at best, the lonely wilderness paths were beset with many perils. More than five hundred miles of almost unbroken forest had to be traversed and the lofty mountain barrier of the Unakas and the Smokies had to be climbed or circumvented.

Possibly Priber went alone and won through by good luck; more likely, he attached himself during most of the journey to the pack-horse train of some trader bound for the Indian lands. All that is certain is that he reached Great Tellico, with his box of books, his bottle of ink, his smile and his dream. And, after a while, strange things began to happen.

Through the high passes of the Unakas, over the intervening leagues of forest, rumors began to drift down to the English settlements on the coast. Frontier hunters in fringed buckshirts, traders leading their caravans down to Charlestown along the winding wilderness paths brought the stories with them. In general they were pretty much alike.

A queer little man with a quick smile and bright observant eyes had appeared, defenseless and alone, among the warlike Cherokees beyond the Unaka Mountains. How he had done it nobody knew, but somehow he had gained the favor of Moytoy of Tellico, most powerful of the chiefs.

He had become as much of an Indian as the red

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men themselves. He had stripped off his European clothes and assumed the dress of an Indian; he had been adopted into the tribe as a "great beloved man" and had married a warrior's daughter. Learning the Cherokees' language with marvelous ease, he had become their counselor and teacher. Among other things, he had taught them the proper use of weights and measures and, especially, of steelyards, to the great inconvenience of the English traders, many of whom were exceedingly canny business men. Worst of all, he was preaching among the Indians the most pernicious doctrine that could possibly be imagined—namely, that they must cede no more of their lands to the white man but must hold on jealously to every foot of the soil that was rightfully theirs.

So ran the stories brought down from the inner wilderness by the hunters and traders. Then one day the English Governor in Charlestown received a letter which probably surprised him as much as any letter he had ever received in his life.

It was an official communication dispatched from Great Tellico, capital of the Cherokee nation, and, in effect, it informed His Excellency the Governor, politely but firmly, that the sooner he and his English got out of America the better, because America belonged to the Indians and the Indians intended to keep

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it. The letter was signed "Christian Priber, Prime Minister."

Evidently, a lot of water had run under the bridge since little Mr. Priber, dreaming his dream of a regenerated world, had looked at himself in his mirror that day in London. He had actually made the first half of his dream come true. He was no longer an insignificant nonentity of whom nobody had ever heard. He was Prime Minister of the newest of earth's empires, an empire of which he was the real dictator, and which felt itself strong enough to talk stiffly even to mighty England.

It was an amazing transformation. Even if there were no more than this to Priber's story, this alone would make it one of the most dramatic true stories that America affords. Picture the scene in that wild and beautiful setting beyond the rampart of the Unakas—the scene in Great Tellico that day when Christian Priber crowned the tall Moytoy "Emperour" of a new commonwealth, which he named the "Kingdom of Paradise."

He had by then—through his good works among them and through his marriage to the Indian girl whose heart he had won—established himself firmly in the confidence of the Cherokees. In deference to the red men's taste for stately ceremonial, he had devised

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an impressive new ritual for the crowning of the Emperor and a variety of imposing titles for the other chiefs who constituted the nobles of the court, reserving for himself the title of Secretary of State or Prime Minister.

It must have been one of the most extraordinary spectacles the American wilderness ever witnessed: the chiefs and great war-captains in their barbaric panoply; the sonorous voices of the Indian orators filling the council-house; the weird insistent thumping of the war-drums; the dance of the maidens in their picturesque finery; the stately procession of the plumed and painted warriors past the Emperor's "throne." And it must have been a great day for the man who was author of it all—the little philosopher and dreamer who, risking torture and the stake, had plunged into the vast dangerous forest with his box of books, his bottle of ink, his smile—and his dream.

But to him it was only the prelude, only the beginning of the dream's fulfillment. Even more amazing than the thing he did is the thing he planned—the second half of the dream.

He planned to set up in America two hundred years ago a civilization strikingly like that proposed for Soviet Russia—minus the bloodshed and the terror. In the new system of government which he had worked out,

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and which was fully described in a manuscript book written by himself and always at his hand, were included many of the same ideas that startled the world when, two centuries later, the Russian upheaval gave them prominence. The red "Emperour" and his imperial court were temporary expedients to be discarded as soon as the painted warriors of the forest had cleared America of foreign foes. With that accomplished, the Empire or Kingdom of Paradise would be supplanted by a Republic of Paradise, the purest and justest government ever known.

It would be, Priber planned, a Republic founded upon natural right and the Golden Rule. In it would be no differences of rank or condition, no poor and no rich. All men and women would be absolutely equal, even in such details as the houses they dwelt in and the furniture they used. To insure this equality, private ownership would be eliminated altogether; all goods, all property of every kind (books and ink were, alone, excepted!) would be held by all in common. And, as there would be perfect equality, so, too, there would be perfect liberty. The only law would be the Law of Nature; and in order that liberty should be complete and the women share it equally with the men, marriage would be abolished and all children born in the Republic would be wards of the State, which would

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rear and educate them in accordance with their talents and in such ways as would promote the common good.

Such was Christian Priber's dream for America—essentially the same dream that came to crimson life in Russia two hundred years afterward. That it had birth two centuries ago in the American wilderness is a fact almost too strange to be believed, a fact, surely, of extraordinary interest.

Priber dreamed it without its modern accompaniment of havoc and slaughter. He believed sincerely that his plan would work; that it would abolish poverty, greed and tyranny; that in his Republic of Paradise all would enjoy unprecedented happiness; that his ideal commonwealth would become a model for all nations and provide a panacea for society's ills. He believed, too, and positively declared, that the new system could be substituted for the old swiftly and with a minimum of strife.

What was the end of Christian Priber and his Republic of Paradise and his dream that was to rescue mankind?

The end that overtakes most dreams. England, greatest of colonizers, greatest of civilizers, has preferred to do her civilizing in her own way. Intent upon having the American continent for her own, England

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and the English in America viewed the new Red Empire beyond the Unakas with growing alarm.

Neither the buckskin diplomats of Charlestown nor the silken statesmen of Whitehall understood Priber's real object; his dream of a Republic of the Golden Rule was probably too new and strange for them to comprehend. They believed him to be an exceedingly skillful agent sent by the Louisiana French to win the red nations to the French side in the struggle for possession of the continent. If the other Indian nations joined the movement—and Priber was working hard to bring them in—America might be lost to England.

So it was necessary to "get" Priber.

The Governor at Charlestown called in Ludovick Grant. Grant was a veteran wilderness man, who had for many years traded among the Cherokees and stood well with them. He made an attempt to kidnap the Prime Minister and so enraged the Indians that he threw up the undertaking in haste.

Then Colonel Fox, a Commissioner representing the Governor, took the matter in hand. With decoy letters and messages he tried to lure Priber into a trap. Failing, he marched boldly into Tellico town with his men, making a loud show of authority as the emissary of the Great King over the Broad Water, and informed Priber that he was under arrest.

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The little Prime Minister smiled benignly upon him. He made Fox a gently reproving speech and persuaded the glowering braves not to tomahawk him on the spot. The fuming Colonel, probably speechless with rage, was escorted out of the Cherokee country by a detachment of the Prime Minister's personal life-guards, picked warriors all. He had Priber to thank for the fact that he got back to Charlestown with his scalp still in the place where he liked to wear it.

Nevertheless, in the end they got Christian Priber. They got him after six years, just at the moment when another phase of his dream was about to come true, just at the moment when he was about to quadruple the strength of his Red Empire by adding to it the powerful Creeks and Choctaws and the western Mississippi nations.

He might have laughed at England then, as he had laughed at England's Commissioner. With thousands of red warriors at his command, he might have changed the whole history of the continent with results that we can only conjecture now. But, in the nick of time—and, of course, it was a fortunate thing for us—they got him.

He had bidden good-by to the black-eyed girl at Great Tellico—without foreboding, for he expected to return to her soon. With only a small escort of war-

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riors (for this seemed a safe and easy journey) he had gone to the country of the Greeks to cement the new alliance which meant so much to his dream. He had with him his precious book, in which the constitution of the Republic of Paradise was set forth, and probably he was even happier than usual, for it seemed that his brightest hopes would soon be realized.

Suddenly, near the Indian village of Tallapoose in Alabama, he was ambushed by a party of frontiersmen who had persuaded a number of Creek Indians to help them—and Christian Priber's dream of saving the world was ended.

They didn't kill him. They hurried him secretly out of the Indian country to Frederika in Georgia, and there for some years he lived in prison, closely guarded, a sentry pacing always before his door. What became of his book, which was captured with him, is not known. Possibly he smuggled it out of his prison, for he told a visitor that it was being printed, though he would not say where, and it has never been found. He did not know that, after his capture, his Red Empire soon fell to pieces. To the end he believed that his aides among the Indians were carrying on his work and that within a few years the last Europeans would be driven from America's shores.

He never saw his black-eyed girl again. Probably he

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loved her, for he loved most people; and the Cherokee girls of that time, according to contemporary accounts, were not the stolid, ugly "squaws" that one is likely to picture, but tall, slender, lively, very pleasing to the eye. What became of this Indian girl is not recorded and even her name is lost. It may have been Adsila the Blossom, or Kamama the Butterfly, or Ayunli the Graceful Dancer, or some other lovely Cherokee name.

As for Priber, he lived uncomplainingly in his prison, always cheerful, always courageous, and after a while he died. A great deal of fiction has been written in and about America. Not much of it is as strange as the true story of Christian Priber and his Republic of Paradise and his dream that was to save the world.⁹

CHAPTER FIVE

Drums Under the Hills



THERE was another kind of dreaming that was done in the American wilderness, and you must know about this too, for otherwise you cannot know the hill yonder across the road or the ground upon which your house stands or the brook where you saw the heron yesterday. Unless you know about these other dreams, which in their way were no less wonderful than Christian Priber's, you can never understand either the land itself or the red people whose land it once was. So, for a little while longer, let us talk of dreams.

One evening four young women came to a dance in Notteley town. Nobody knew who they were, but they were the prettiest girls at the dance and when, about midnight, they disappeared, their absence was noticed at once. Some of the young men of Notteley who were already falling in love with them ran out of doors and

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saw the four girls walking down the moonlit path to the river ford. The young fellows followed them, but at the water's edge they vanished, and the young men looked at each other with blank, astonished faces for they knew that their hearts had been stolen by Nun-nehi girls.

Years ago I heard the tale as we sat in the grass outside a little Indian cabin in Ocona Luftee Valley in the shadow of the Great Smoky Mountains. The Indian who told the story knew my language as well as he knew his own and he had none of the glum taciturnity that all Indians are supposed to possess. We talked for a long while that day, not of old wars or old hunts or old wrongs, but of dreams and dream-places and dream-people: of Atagahi, the Secret Lake, and Awi Usdi, the Lord of the Deer, and Kanati, the Master of Game, and the mysterious drums that are sometimes heard under the hills. As he talked and I listened, prompting him now and then with questions, I began to realize that this was important. I was discovering a new country, a country which had been there all the while but which I had never seen.

It was the myth-world of America that was opening before me. I had my first real glimpse of it that morning in Ocona Luftee Valley under the eastern rampart of the Great Smokies, the last virgin wilderness of the

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East, which has now become a great national playground and park. But wherever you are in America you may find it. In every part of America Indians once lived and wherever they lived they made their myths and legends, creating another world behind the visible world around them, peopling it with gods and half-gods, gnomes and nymphs and animals stranger than those we know; and around these mythical beings stories grew, stories which often came to be attached to specific places—some mountain or stream or valley where once upon a time a strange thing happened like the coming of the Nunnehi girls to Notteley town.

To most of us this “other America” is an undiscovered country. We think of America as too new to have a mythology of its own and the word carries us back to ancient Greece and the other Old World regions whence came the only myths that we know. The fact is that America, too, is a land of fascinating legend; it is no raw new upstart with nothing to offer except its physical attractions. It was here aeons before we came to it and its hills and valleys have as long memories as those of Hellas—memories, fancies, imaginings which should surely be more interesting to us than any others because they are native to our soil.

It is a far journey to Olympus whence Zeus hurled his thunderbolts. Most of us will never see the plains

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where Nimrod hunted or the mountains where Sindbad's roc built its nest. But Gigagei, the Red Man of the Lightning, was as terrible as Zeus in his anger and he lived in Galu'lati, the upper country, directly above our own sky. Kanati, the Master of Game, was as mighty a hunter as Nimrod and it was here in our own woods that he hunted with timber wolves as his helpers. The Tlanuwa was as great a bird as the roc for it could carry men and even bears in its talons, and the cliff where the Tlanuwa had its eyrie is only a few hours from New York.

I learned of these great ones later. It was the Nunnehi with whom I fell in love at the beginning like the young men of Notteley town. Something about them I learned that day in Ocona Luftee Valley—enough to open my eyes. We think of the Indian only as a ruthless and bloodthirsty savage, but there was something more than cruelty and blood-lust in the people whose minds conceived the Nunnehi. They are no brutal martial saga such as the savage warrior loves: rather they are a gentle pastoral poem of green tranquil places where the war-whoop is never heard and peace is everlasting.

In a spacious land under the mountains the Nunnehi have their towns. War is unknown in their country and instead of battles there is much singing and dancing,

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for the Nunnehi love music and are the best dancers in the world. Often some Indian hunter, roaming over the mountains, hears the dance-songs and the beating of drums. But when he moves toward the sound, it will cease suddenly and then be heard once more in another direction; and when this has happened again and again, he knows that somewhere under his feet is a Nunnehi town.

Once long ago, before white men were known in the upland country of the Cherokees, two strangers appeared in the Indian village of Kanasta not far from where the little town of Brevard in western North Carolina now stands. There was nothing remarkable about their dress or features and the Kanasta folk thought that they were visitors from one of the other villages beyond the main ridge of the Great Smokies. But this was not so. The two strangers went straight to the chief's house and told him that they were messengers from the Nunnehi.

They had come, they said, from Tsuwatelda—a mountain that I knew as Pilot Knob—beneath which the Nunnehi had one of their largest towns; and they brought an invitation to the people of Kanasta to leave the upper world and dwell thenceforward with the Nunnehi in their peaceful subterranean domain. "Here," they said, "you have wars and bloodshed, and

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soon a powerful enemy is coming to take your country from you. Fast seven days and then come to us, for in our country you will be happy always and need fear no danger as long as you live."

The Kanasta folk held a council and decided to go. They fasted six days and on the morning of the seventh they saw a procession approaching. The townspeople went out to meet the newcomers and the two parties marched together to Tsuwatelda, which was only a few miles away. When they reached the mountain, suddenly a door opened in the side of a cliff. Through this they entered and found within wide green pastures and woodlands even finer than their own, and almost at once they came to a town much larger than Kanasta with the houses ranged in two rows.

They settled there in houses (wigwams were not used in the Cherokee country) which had been made ready for them, and they were completely happy except one man who was not a native of Kanasta and who grew lonely for friends he had left behind in his own town. So this man was allowed to go back through the door of the mountain into the outer world. But all the people of Kanasta remained with the Nunnehi in their green country under Tsuwatelda, and they alone of the Cherokee nation escaped the long wars and the suffer-

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ing that ensued when the white men invaded the mountain region and conquered the Cherokee lands.

They are still there under Tsuwatelda; and because they are there, Pilot Knob, as the white man ignorantly calls it, is much more than a mountain—it is an enchanted place, one that is worth a day's journey to see. It is not alone, however, for there are many other places which the Nunnehi are known to inhabit. Almost anywhere in the old Indian country the mysterious drums may be heard and, though some may say that the sound is only a waterfall in the distance, you will know that in one of their townhouses under the hills the Nunnehi are holding a dance. You may be filled with wonder but you need not be afraid for they are a friendly good folk—no one supposes that the girls who stole the hearts of the Notteley men intended to do harm.

The Nunnehi, of whom many other stories are told, are the most important of the subterranean kindred. There is a somewhat similar race known as Water Dwellers who live under the beds of the streams; and still another race called Little People inhabit small caves in the rocks and are generally "good fairies," though they are easily offended. Notable among the

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woods-sprites are two handsome little long-haired fellows named Tsawasi and Tsagasi, full of mischief and yet often helpful to the hunter who prays to them in the proper way. There is a mysterious fairy called Fire-Bearer who goes about at night with a torch or lantern and whom it is best to avoid; and most appealing of all these woodland folk is a Puck-like elf named Detsata who has innumerable children all exactly like himself and all known by the same name. Detsata was once a boy who ran away to the woods, and when a hunter shoots an arrow and fails to find it, the chances are that the prankish Detsata has stolen it.

These are all—except the Nunnehi—among the lesser beings of the myths. Greater than they, as gods are greater than fairies, are Gigagei, the Red Man of the Lightning, and Kanati, the Master of Game.

Kanati, whose wife is Selu the Corn, is above all a mighty hunter. Timber wolves form his hunting pack and the man who kills one will find that the weapon with which the deed was done becomes worthless. Kanati knows all the deep secrets of the woods and it was from his sons that the people learned in the beginning the Seven Songs of the Deer, the songs with which the deer may be called. Most of these are forgotten now, but this one is still remembered:

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O Deer, you are close to the tree,
You sweeten your mouth with acorns;
Now you are coming nearer,
You are coming to where your food is.

Gigagei, the Red Man of the Lightning, who lives in Galu'lati the heavenly country above the sky-vault, is sometimes called the Great Thunderer to distinguish him from certain lesser thunder-gods. Sometimes he appears to be the same as Kanati, who is also a mighty Thunderer and perhaps the greatest of all the gods; at other times he seems a distinct personage. As a rule he is not an unfriendly deity—it is the lesser Thunders that are most harmful—but his power is tremendous. Once when Utlunta the Spear-Finger built an enormous rock-bridge through the air all the way from Hi-wassie to Whiteside Mountain in the Blue Ridge, Gigagei smote it with his lightning and shattered it to fragments.

This was one of his good deeds, for Utlunta was a terrible enemy of the human race—a stone-armored ogress who fed on the livers of people whom she killed by stabbing them in the neck with her forefinger, which was hard as bone and sharp as a spear. Gigagei did not slay her but only wrecked her aerial bridge; but for the chickadee, she might be roaming the woods today.

Across a path which she was accustomed to follow,

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the warriors dug a pit, hiding it with earth and grass. Utlunta fell into the pit; but the warriors' arrows could not penetrate her stone armor and she was about to climb out and destroy them all. They were shooting at her breast because a tufted titmouse, perched in a tree above the pit, sang "un, un, un," and they believed that he was trying to say "unahu," which means heart; but though many arrows struck the place where her heart should be, they only glanced off from her rocky mail and fell broken at her feet.

At last, when all seemed lost, a chickadee flew down into the pit and lit for a moment on Utlunta's right hand. The warriors were sure that this must be a sign, so they aimed at the hand where the little bird had paused; and soon an arrow struck just where Utlunta's spear-like forefinger joined her hand and she fell dead because it was there that her heart was. The warriors caught the titmouse and cut off the tip of his tongue; but the chickadee they named Truth-Teller and ever since then they have loved him better than almost any other of the smaller birds.

Once we were following the high main ridge of the Great Smokies toward Clingman's Dome, the tallest of the Smoky peaks. All the way I was looking for Atagahi, the Secret Lake. I had little hope of finding

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it for many have searched for it in vain, yet all know that it is there, hidden in a deep valley of the magnificent wooded wilderness out of which Kuwahi, as the Indians call Clingman's, soars toward the clouds. Hunters have come near the place and have known that they were near it because, as they descended into the valley, they heard a strange sound as of numberless wings beating the air—the pinions of the thousands of wildfowl that haunt the lake. But always, as they pushed eagerly on, thinking that at last they would see what no man had ever seen, the noise of wings died away and when they reached the bottom of the valley they found only a desolate dry flat walled in by the forest and devoid of life.

Yet the Cherokees who still live in Ocona Luftee Valley know that Lake Atagahi exists and will be seen some day by someone who has the right kind of vision. It is the most beautiful lake in the mountains or, some say, in all the world—a wide sheet of shining purple water fed by springs which gush from the steep crags around it; and nowhere else in the world can be seen so many birds as at Atagahi, for the whole air above the lake is a living whirlpool of birds—wild geese, ducks, swans, curlews and waterfowl of many kinds. But next to its beauty and its secretness the chief wonder of Lake Atagahi is the bears, for all around the wooded

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verge bears will be seen coming out of the forest and plunging into the water to swim across to the other shore.

These are bears that have been wounded and have traveled perhaps hundreds of miles to Atagahi to be healed of their hurts. No matter how badly they are injured they will recover if only they can reach the enchanted lake in time. Even those that are scarcely able to crawl into the water begin at once to regain their strength and are whole and well again when they emerge on the opposite strand. Hence all the wild country around the lake is a favorite resort for the bears, and under Kuwahi and certain neighboring peaks they have villages and townhouses, while Kuwahi itself is the home of White Bear, the chief of all the bear kind.

There is another animal-chieftain of the myths more likely to be seen than White Bear since he ranges far and wide; once, near Tsuwatelda, the mountain of the Nunnehi, I thought for a moment that I saw him. This is Awi Usdi, the Little Emperor of the Deer.

Awi Usdi, or Little Deer, is white and very small, less than half as large as an ordinary buck; but he has fine branching antlers and the hunter who can shoot him and obtain even a fragment of his horns will have good luck ever after. There is small chance of that,

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however. Only one hunter in a thousand is as wise in woodcraft as Little Deer, and even if he is killed he does not remain dead but soon comes to life again.

Some time after the beginning of the world, when mankind first began to war against the animals, councils were held by all the four-footed kindreds to plan some means of securing their safety. The bears were called together by their chief White Bear in his town-house under Kuwahi and one of them proposed that they should defend themselves against man by using the same weapons, that is, bows and arrows. This was tried, but the bears' long claws, catching the bowstrings, made it impossible for them to shoot accurately. Then it was suggested that they cut off their claws, but White Bear would not allow this. Without their claws, he said, they could not kill game or climb trees, and it would be better to be killed quickly by man than starve to death. So the bears' council broke up without accomplishing anything.

Then Awi Usdi, the Little Deer, called his people together, and though they are more timid than the bear people, on this occasion they showed more resourcefulness: they decided to send rheumatism to every hunter who killed a deer without asking their pardon for the misdeed.

Ever since then, whenever a deer is killed and taken

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away by a hunter, Awi Usdi hastens to the spot. Placing his ear close to the bloodstains on the ground, he asks them whether they heard the hunter's prayer for pardon, and if the answer is "No," he follows, swift as the wind, on the trail of the hunter. Nothing can turn him aside, not even fires kindled on the trail, and though the man may have reached the village and shut himself in his house, this will not save him. Awi Usdi, who can become invisible at will, enters the house and strikes rheumatism into the man so that he becomes a helpless cripple who will never be able to hunt again.

Of all the animals of the myths none has so strong a fascination as the Great Mythic Hawk known as the Tlanuwa. Years before I had ever heard of that mighty bird I knew Whiteside Mountain—the same mountain which Utlunta the Spear-Finger used as one of the piers for her aerial bridge—and had spent hours and days all told looking up at its huge rock-face which is said to be the highest crag east of the Rockies. Sani'gilagi the Indians called it, and it is one of the wonders of America, for one can see that at some time in the past some titanic force tore away half the mountain, leaving that perpendicular rock-wall towering fifteen hundred feet or more above the valley, the most stu-

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pendous battlement of stone anywhere in the eastern United States.

I thought I knew Whiteside well in those days when I camped on Silver Run and made more than one trip into Whiteside Cove and climbed the mountain itself looking for duck hawks and ravens. Later I discovered how little I had really known about it for I had been unaware of the most interesting thing of all—that once a Tlanuwa had its eyrie there. This was a huge hawk which, according to some accounts, was exactly like a duck hawk or peregrine falcon but many times larger, while others describe it as resembling a gigantic hornet in flight. It preyed upon large animals and human beings, and one of the best of the old tales that have come down is that of a man who was carried off by a Tlanuwa.

He was a hunter who was attacked one day in an open place in the woods. The great bird swooped down suddenly upon him, struck its claws into his hunting pack and carried him far up into the air, depositing him at last at the mouth of a cave near the top of a high mountain. Inside the cave, from the roof of which water was dripping, was a nest and in the nest were two young Tlanuwas.

The hunter supposed that he would be killed at once to provide food for the hungry nestlings. This did not

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happen, however. The old Tlanuwa flew away without harming him, to return presently with a deer which it proceeded to tear to pieces, giving some of the meat to the nestlings and some to the hunter. This continued day after day, the old bird bringing deer and bears to the nest and always allowing the hunter to have a share of the meat. He could not climb either up or down from the cave, but finally, in desperation, he thought of a way to escape.

The young birds were now well grown, and one morning, while the old Tlanuwa was away, the man dragged one of the young ones out upon the rock-shelf at the mouth of the cave. With a strap from his pack he tied himself firmly to its legs; then with the flat side of his tomahawk he struck it in the head again and again. When it was dazed and half stunned he pushed it off the rock-shelf into the air.

It fell toward the valley and he, being tied to its legs, fell with it. But it was not too dazed to open its wings instinctively and this checked the descent so that presently they were gliding downward at an angle instead of dropping vertically.

Suddenly the hunter realized that the bird was reviving and was trying to fly up to the nest on the crag. He managed to reach upward and strike it in the head once more until it was again too weak to do anything

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except glide downward on set wings. No one knows how long this continued, the Tlanuwa reviving and circling upward and then, half stunned by the hunter's hatchet, descending again; but that up-and-down ride through the air, far above the tree-tops and the hills, was surely the strangest ride that any man ever had. Through it all the hunter kept his coolness and courage and at last he brought his unwilling steed down into the top of a tall tulip poplar. The man untied the strap and let the young Tlanuwa go because, after all, it had saved him. Then he climbed down the tree and returned to his home none the worse for his experience.

This must have been in the days when Tlanuwas were still fairly common and it is not known just where the adventure happened; it may have been on Whiteside or it may have been at a certain cliff on the Little Tennessee which is still known to the Indians as "the Tlanuwa Place" because a pair of the birds once nested there. It was on Whiteside, however, that one of the last of the man-killing Tlanuwas had its home, one which carried off so many victims that a great council was held and men were stationed on the tops of all the highest mountains to watch for the bird and discover whence it came, for at that time no one knew where its eyrie was.

At last it was seen from one mountain-top and the

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watcher there signaled to the man on the next mountain to be on the look-out. The second man saw it as it passed over him and then the man on the third mountain saw it winging onward through the upper air. Before he lost sight of it the watcher on the fourth mountain discovered its approach and gave the signal, which was passed on from peak to peak. In this way the great bird's course was traced for many miles until it was seen to alight at the mouth of a cave high up on Whiteside Mountain.

A large force of warriors set off at once to attack the winged monster in its lair, only to find that the cave was entirely inaccessible. They did their best to reach it but in vain, and for a while it appeared that all the trouble which had been taken had been fruitless. But Gigagei, the Great Thunderer, suddenly smote the mountain with his lightning and tore away half of it, and the Tlanuwa, partly disabled by the thunderbolt, fell into the valley and was killed by the warriors after a furious battle. And this is why Whiteside today, with its mile-long precipice of smooth, bare, almost perpendicular rock, resembles a mountain which some Titan has sliced in half with a giant cleaver.

The Nunnehi singing and dancing in their happy underground country; mischievous Detsata and his

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many children and the other little people of the woods; Gigagei the Thunderer and Kanati, greatest of hunters, and Utlunta the Spear-Finger whose aerial bridge was one of the world's wonders; White Bear, the wise old chieftain, keeping guard over Atagahi, the Secret Lake, where the wounded bears come to be healed; Awi Usdi, the Little Emperor of the Deer, speaking to the blood-stains of his people; the Tlanuwa, huge as Sindbad's roc, winging over the wooded ranges in search of victims while the watchers on the mountain-tops below signal his coming from peak to peak—these are only a few that play a part in American myth and legend, that wonder-tale of our own land which to most of us is a closed book.

There are many others, too many to speak of here: Tsulkalu, the slant-eyed giant who shares with Kanati dominion over the game; Aganuntsi the wizard who slew the great snake Uktena, the greatest ever known; the Daughter of the Sun who danced with the ghosts in the Darkening Land and became the redbird or cardinal we see today; the little crooked men called Tsundigewi who lived in nests scooped in the sand until the sand-hill cranes killed them all. Indeed, the cast of characters is almost endless, the number of tales immense, for every part of America has its own *dramatis personae*, its own legends differing from those of other

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regions, though there are some which are widely spread.

To know something of them, and in particular to know those native to your own district, is to discover a new enchantment in familiar places, a charm akin to that which some Old World countries have. Only here and there, in parts of the West and isolated spots like Ocona Luftee Valley where the Eastern Cherokee live on their little mountain farms, may you still learn some of them at first hand. Even where Indians survive most of the old story-tellers have passed on. The Indian in Ocona Luftee who first told me of the Nunnehi had learned about them from Owen Walkingstick; and Owen Walkingstick probably had the story from Ayunini the Swimmer or Itagunahi who lived to be almost a hundred and whose "white" name was John Ax. Both Swimmer and John Ax, who knew all the "old beloved things," have been dead these many years. But half a century ago James Mooney, an ethnologist, worked in Ocona Luftee and talked with them often; and but for Mooney's careful researches, buried in a huge government report, and certain old books by earlier travelers who knew the mountain Cherokee in their better days, this chapter would be far more of a fragment than it is, for in Ocona Luftee today most of the old tales are remembered only vaguely or in part.¹⁰

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Those are the places where you must go mining for this gold: the places where Indians still live if you can get to them and find one who has not forgotten; and the dark remote shelves in libraries where dust gathers on old travel-books and ponderous ethnological tomes and publications of learned societies which nobody reads. Often the gold in the old books is overlaid by dross and in the later scientific ones the beauty of the legend is hidden by a forbidding technical jargon and a determination to make a colorless science out of all folk-lore. But the gold is there, though you may have to dig for it, and we must be grateful to the men who saved it while there was yet time.

They may not have known it or, if they did, some of them tried hard to hide it, but there is more of the stuff of poetry in their sober pages than in much of the verse that is written in America today. "The charm of the Indian to me," said Thoreau, "is that he stands free and unconstrained in Nature, is her inhabitant and not her guest, and wears her easily and gracefully." That is part at least of the charm of the myths.

They are not all beautiful like the Nunnehi, for the Indian saw much that was terrible in Nature and was often afraid. But he saw her as she should be seen—emotionally, with the spirit as well as with the eyes; and the myths are not made things but natural things;

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they are part of her and are full of a sense of oneness with her which we have lost.

Most important of all, they are the legends of our own land, the gods and heroes of our own hills, the birds and animals of our own woods. They give a new glamour to the places and things we know. It was the chickadee outside *your* window who told the warriors how to kill Utlunta the Spear-Finger. Parnassus and Latmos are far away, but you can go to Tsuwatelda tomorrow and hear the Nunnehi drums.

CHAPTER SIX

The Warriors' Path



IF YOU do go—if, let us say, you live in New York or Chicago or Cincinnati and decide one day to visit that beautiful Southern mountain country where the drums of the Nunnehi may be heard under the hills—how shall you get there? Very easily, of course. A hundred paved highways and several railroads lead to the Great Smokies which lie almost in the center of the Eastern United States. You will have road-maps showing your route, and your journey will be more interesting if, in addition to the road-maps of today, you have with you also a road-map of the red man's America.

That sounds like an absurd suggestion. It seems ridiculous to speak of road-maps of a period when, as everybody knows, America was a “pathless wilderness” and an unbroken forest stretched from the Atlantic coast to the Western prairies.

It isn't absurd, however. A map of the highway sys-

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tem of America before the white man came would look not unlike the 1940 road-maps which you get today from service stations along your route. At first glance, in fact, you might take it for one of these, for, like the road-maps of today, it would show an intricate network of lines running in every direction and covering the whole country from the Great Lakes to the Gulf.

These lines would represent the roads of that time, the roads that the Indian traveled. They were almost as numerous, it seems, as our roads are now and many of them were good roads of their kind, the kind the red man needed and preferred. They were not as wide as our roads, of course, because the Indian had no use for wide highways. They were paths or trails winding through the vast shadowy forest which shrouded the face of the land, and most of them were just wide enough to permit the passage of a party moving in single file. Nevertheless, they constituted a far-flung and effective system of communication linking together all parts of what is now the United States; and so highly developed was this system that a single glance at such a map would give you a brand-new conception of the American wilderness which, as a matter of fact, was not a pathless wilderness at all but was penetrated in every direction by literally thousands of paths.

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That, to most people, is a completely surprising discovery. If, now, you should compare the ancient map with a modern road-map showing both rail and motor routes, you would make another discovery equally interesting. You would find that the two maps coincide so strikingly as to compel the conclusion that the highway system of the Indian was the foundation of both our railroad and highway systems today.

Thus, when you board a train at Boston to go to Albany, you follow the old Bay Path of the New England tribes. When you ride on the New York Central north or west in New York State, you follow for many miles the ancient trails of the Iroquois. When you take the Broadway Limited to Pittsburgh and Chicago, you are traveling the Kittanning Trail of the early traders which, in its turn, was a development of an Indian path. When you go from New York to Philadelphia, you follow almost exactly the old path of the red men across New Jersey, a northern extension of the Great Indian Warpath coming up from the deep South. When you ride on the Baltimore & Ohio beyond the head of the Potomac, you are traveling in large part along Nema-colin's Path to the Ohio, so named for a Delaware chief. In fact, in the rough country of West Virginia the rails follow so exactly the course of the red men's highway

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that in two instances, where the railroad builders were compelled to tunnel through hills, these tunnels lie directly under the old Indian paths.

Hence it isn't a matter of dead-and-gone ancient history, this matter of Indian road-maps; you can't travel far in the United States today without following roads that the Indians used. And—another fact which is surprising to most people—some of the most important of the red man's roads were trodden out first by the hoofs of thousands of buffalo pushing eastward from the Plains through the great midland forest and crossing the mountain barrier of the Appalachians to graze in the splendid park-like woodlands of the Atlantic slope.

The Indian took these buffalo roads, worn deep and wide by innumerable hoofs, and incorporated them into his system; and later, when the white pioneers came and, long after them, the railroad builders, they found that the buffalo and the Indian between them had done an excellent job of engineering. They had striped and threaded and belted the vast American forest with a network of paths which so surely found the shortest and easiest routes to goals hundreds of miles distant that this highway system of the bison and the red man is still the basic pattern of land-travel in America today.

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There was one thread in that pattern which must be traced in detail here. It ought to be one of the famous roads of America, but millions of people travel it who have never heard its name. It existed probably thousands of years before Columbus sailed out of Palos and it played a great part, perhaps a greater part than any other, in the migrations of tribes and nations which flowed up and down and across the continent long centuries before the white man arrived. Later it became primarily a path of war, and perhaps no other highway in America has seen more deeds of daring or witnessed stranger pageantry of the wilderness.

The white pioneers knew it early as the Warriors' Path. To the Indians it was Athiamiowee, which means the same thing—Path of the Armed Ones. Beginning on the shore of Lake Erie at Sandusky Bay, it struck almost straight southward through the center of Ohio. It passed through or very close to the spot where Columbus now stands and thence it led down the Scioto Valley, through Circleville, Chillicothe and Portsmouth, to strike the Ohio River at the mouth of the Scioto.

This was one of the recognized crossings of the Indian days, one of the most important aboriginal gateways in America. Upon it converged many other paths coming in from New York and New England, from

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Indiana, Illinois and the Northwest. But the main trunk-line, the Warriors' Path, still bore southward across the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, passing close by Winchester and then by Manchester, heading straight for the great mountain portal at Cumberland Gap.

There, if we follow strictly the old usage, the Warriors' Path ended, but its ending is in reality no more than a change of name. South and east of the Gap, probably near the Wolf Hills, it joined with another notable wilderness highway known from the earliest days as the Great Indian Warpath. This trail came down from New York in two prongs, one of which wound through western Pennsylvania while the other ran close to where Philadelphia now stands, close to or through Lancaster, York and Gettysburg, to cross the Potomac at Wadkin's Ferry and, passing through Martinsburg, Winchester, Staunton, Lexington and Roanoke, joined the eastward extension of the Warriors' Path near Abingdon, Virginia.

For the rest of the way southward these two—the Warriors' Path and the Great Indian Warpath—are really identical, the two most notable thoroughfares of the early American wilderness merged into one. Down the long wide valley between the Clinch and the Cumberlands on the west and the Iron Mountains and the

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Smokies on the east the great path wound through a forest teeming with game. At the French Broad near Knoxville a branch led off to the eastward, climbing the high ridge of the Smokies through what is now the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Southward the main route continued through the present Maryville, through Echota, the ancient Cherokee capital, past the spot which is now Chattanooga, to make junction with the east-and-west warpath of the Creek Confederacy, whence other paths led off still farther south to the shores of the Gulf.

A path—even an Indian path ten thousand years old—may be in itself of little interest. You must be able to see what passed along it; and you must know what lay at each end of the path.

At the northern end of the Warriors' Path was the Iroquois League or League of the Five Nations. From their homeland in New York the Five Nations had extended their sway over the other tribes of the North until they were lords of the land from Vermont to the shores of Lake Michigan and from the St. Lawrence to the Dark and Bloody Ground. Then they began to look farther south, beyond the vassal tribes of Ohio, across the no-man's land of Kentucky. Farther and farther southward the Iroquois war-parties journeyed

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along the Warriors' Path until at last, somewhere in the debatable midlands, they met the warriors of the Southern mountains, the powerful Cherokee.

Then began, two centuries before our Civil War, a war between North and South which was to last a hundred years; and in the long story of the Warriors' Path those hundred years are probably the most stirring of all.

The first clash was a Cherokee victory; a party of Iroquois was ambushed and destroyed. Throughout the Iroquois empire, along the maze of paths by Erie and Genesee and Seneca and Onondaga and Schoharie, swift runners carried the news. The best warriors of the Five Nations, led by the Seneca, took the war-trail against the Southerners.

Southward along the Warriors' Path through Ohio and Kentucky and down the upper prongs of the Great Indian Warpath through Pennsylvania and West Virginia, past the site of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and Lancaster and Lexington and Roanoke, moved shadowy fantastic companies stripped and painted for war. Led by some veteran of many ambushes, they passed silently as panthers, their faces and upper bodies streaked and circled with black and red hematite paint, eagle feathers tossing in their stiffened scalp-locks.

In both Iroquois and Cherokee tradition certain

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forays are remembered. These tribal memories provide an outline; to see the picture vividly you must fill in lost details and substitute probability for unlikely legend.

Coming down the Warriors' Path and continuing southward along the lower prong of the Great Indian Warpath across Tennessee, a strong Seneca war-party turned east at the French Broad along the branch trail which led over the main divide of the Smokies. On a ridge not far from where Robbinsville now stands they found a Cherokee town. All night they lay hidden in the woods; then at first dawn they attacked.

It was a raid like many others. Except a few who escaped in the confusion, all the people of the Cherokee village, women and children as well as men, died under the hatchet with the Iroquois death-whoop ringing in their ears.

At his town on Hiwassee, Talitanigiska, a war chief of the Cherokee, heard the news. The Seneca had a good start, but Talitanigiska and his men tracked them across the high ridge of the Smokies and northward along the Great Warpath across Tennessee. There or on the Warriors' Path beyond Cumberland Gap they ambushed another party of Iroquois headed south, killed them all and took their scalps. Then, day after day, they pushed onward across Kentucky, across Ohio,

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swinging northeastward near the Mingo town which is now Columbus toward the Seneca lands in western New York.

It was night when they came to a Seneca village. In the long central townhouse a celebration was being held. Talitanigiska and his men could hear the shouting and singing and they knew that the Seneca were dancing over fresh Cherokee scalps. The night was very warm; Talitanigiska thought of a plan.

A well-trodden path crossed the clearing, and Talitanigiska found, as he expected, that this path led to a spring just within the cover of the woods. Around the spring he hid his men. Then he waited, watching the townhouse door.

Presently in the doorway a Seneca warrior appeared. He stood there a moment, plainly visible in the bright moonlight, and they saw him wipe the sweat from his forehead with his forefinger; then he walked along the path toward the spring. At the woods' edge he passed so close to two of the hidden Cherokee that they could have touched him, but they waited until he stooped over the spring to drink. Then Talitanigiska, rising behind him, buried his hatchet in the Seneca's neck.

A woman came next. She was a young woman, straight, slender, lithe as a yearling doe. Wide bracelets of copper encircled her arms, her skirt was laced and

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beaded with delicate dyed shells, the braids of her jet-black hair were bright with scarlet feathers of the tanager. She, too, was hot from the dancing so that her cheeks glowed red and her breath came fast as she moved along the path toward the spring, glancing over her shoulder now and then.

Talitanigiska knew that this time it would have to be done very quickly. The girl's backward glances told him that her lover would follow her; and almost at once the lover, a young brave like a bronze statue, appeared in the townhouse door. So Talitanigiska did not wait for the girl to stoop beside the spring.

He whispered to his men, and just as the girl entered the cover of the woods a shape rose behind her, brained her without a sound and dragged her body from the path. Thus they were ready for the lover when he came, striding swiftly along, his eyes searching the shadows ahead too eagerly to note certain darker shadows on each side of the path where it entered the woods. He found his sweetheart, for they laid his body beside that of the girl.

The man who next appeared in the townhouse door was an older warrior, very tall and powerfully built, and they knew at once from his feathers and dress that he was a great war-leader and a sachem, one of the chief men of the Seneca.

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Hence they watched him with especial eagerness. He was very hot and before he stepped from the doorway into the path he slipped off the ceremonial shirt which he had been wearing so that he was naked above the waist. As he walked slowly along the path toward the spring, his upper body, painted black, at times became almost invisible, while his face, white with green and yellow streaks, seemed a ghostly mask wholly detached from his body.

This man was a fox in his cunning. Six paces from the edge of the woods he stopped. Either he had heard some faint sound or, more probably, he had caught the scent of blood, for his head was lifted and he turned it quickly with little jerks from side to side as though he were sniffing the air.

Talitanigiska was ready for this. Behind the tree-trunk which concealed him his hickory bow was already bent. The long cane arrow, tipped with bone, drove clear through the Seneca's throat. He fell with a choked gurgling cry.

Talitanigiska ran out into the open and, stooping over the body, slid his knife around the upper part of the sachem's skull. This required perhaps a minute and a half, and, as he rose with the scalp, another shape appeared in the townhouse door. It was a woman and

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she saw at once the dark form stretched on the ground and the tall Cherokee standing over it.

She sprang back into the house, and suddenly the singing and dancing stopped. Men came swarming out like hornets from their nest. They ran first to the body of the sachem; then they found the other scalped bodies close to the spring.

Only a few minutes were wasted and even in the blackness of the woods the skilled trackers among the Seneca were able to follow the trace. They ran the trail of Talitanigiska and his men for miles through the darkness. Probably they followed it for days; as far, perhaps, as the Tennessee River which was the boundary between North and South—the first Mason's and Dixon's Line. But the Cherokee story of the raid affirms that all the warriors of the party got safely back to their homes except one man.

There were many raids like this, equally merciless, equally daring. Sometimes the Northern warriors were successful, sometimes the Southerners. It was blood spilt in vain—and while the red nations fought each other, the white man pushed onward. The red empire of the North could not break the spirit of the Southern highlanders, nor could the Cherokee wear out the iron will of the Iroquois. The war had lasted approximately

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a hundred years when peace was made in 1768, a peace without victory; and besides Talitanigiska, the Iroquois and Cherokee remember the names of other chiefs who took part in that first war between North and South: Aganstata known as the Great Warrior, Ganogwoyan, Gana and Hatcinondon.

All these used the Warriors' Path. Perhaps most significant of all, Daniel Boone used it when he hewed civilization's first highway across the mountain barrier. For fifty miles through Kentucky beyond Cumberland Gap, Boone's famous Wilderness Road followed the Warriors' Path. And this is one of the dramatic highlights in its story, for when Boone thus turned it to the white man's use, he opened the way for those pale-face bands which, at first in small companies and then in irresistible hordes, were to sweep along the Warriors' Path and overwhelm the race that had created it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pageant of the Herds



SO NOW they are pouring through Cumberland Gap and along the Warriors' Path—the pioneers, the conquerors. The red man's dream of rolling back the white tide has not come true. King Philip and Emperor Brims and Christian Priber are dead; the white tide has reached the mountains now and is surging on over the barrier of the Appalachians.

Before these conquerors in buckskin and homespun, with their long rifles which are to sweep away the game and their light long-handled frontier axes which will sweep away the forests, lies one of the most marvelous lands under the sun: a vast land, rich beyond all imagining, beautiful as God made it, unspoiled by the red men who have dwelt in it for thousands of years. "His landed patrimony," one of the old historians wrote of the Indian, "was given him from the hands of God a magnificent country; and, a magnificent country still,

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he yielded it up to the more vigorous race which supplanted him."

That race—more vigorous, no doubt, also more ruthless, more learned, more cunning and yet in certain important ways less wise—is to change the virgin continent utterly, is to deflower it, rob it of its bloom. Before this happens, let us view the unviolated continent. Our concept of it is vague. We know, for instance, that in the red man's time it was a paradise of wild-life; but details are hard to come by, specific facts are difficult to find. Here let us search out specific facts and details. It will be worth doing, for the spectacle of the virgin continent's wild life, which the Indian kept and which we have ruined, is one of the most wonderful in Nature.

In the panorama of the Indian's unspoiled America nothing is more dramatic than the epic of the buffalo in the East. The very fact that there were buffalo in eastern North America is news to most of us. Yet when the first white men came, and for many years thereafter, buffalo herds were grazing in what is now New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

These Eastern herds were offshoots from the colos-

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sal central herd whose myriads blackened the Western plains from the deserts of Mexico to the Great Slave Lake below the Arctic Circle. From the eastern edge of the prairies, the buffalo's natural home, to the Atlantic coast a vast forest masked the face of the land. Probably thousands of years before the white man's coming, bands of buffalo, breaking away from the fringe of the central herd, pushed their way into this shadowy woodland. Slowly, gradually, these wandering bands penetrated farther and farther into the wilderness of trees, and always as they moved eastward other bands followed them.

Nobody knows when the first of these shaggy pioneers topped the mountain barrier of the Appalachians or when the first great bull lowered his head to drink of some Atlantic tidal river and found the water salt. What we do know is that when Captain John Smith landed at Jamestown and the Pilgrims at Plymouth, buffalo herds were roaming through our Eastern country from Niagara Falls in the north almost to the southern boundary of Georgia.

There is plenty of evidence with which to drive home this fact, so surprising to most people. Perhaps the most picturesque bit is Sam Argoll's buffalo hunt. Samuell Argoll was an English mariner who visited the

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coast of Virginia in 1612. In a letter to Master Nicholas Hawes, Argoll wrote:

“As soon as I had unladen this corne, I set my men to the felling of Timber for the building of a Frigat, which I had left half finished at Point Comfort, the 19 of March: and returned myself with the ship into Pembroke River, and so discovered to the head of it which is about 65 leagues into the Land and navigable for any ship. And then marching into the Countrie, I found great store of Cattle as big as Kine, of which the Indians that were my guides killed a couple, which we found to be very good and wholesome meate and are very easie to be killed in regard they are heavy, slow and not so wild as other beasts of the wildernesse.”

There is no doubt whatsoever that Argoll’s “Cattle” were buffalo and most authorities are agreed that his “Pembroke River” was the Potomac. Since it is unlikely that his party traveled far on foot from the point where they left their ship at the head of navigation, it is probable that these two buffalo were killed almost or actually within sight of the spot where the city of Washington now stands.

That is surely, when one considers what was to come, the most dramatic episode in the whole story of the buffalo: where the blood of those two victims was shed rose in later years the capital of the nation which was

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to wipe the buffalo almost from the face of the earth. Even if Argoll's "Pembroke River" was not the Potomac, the journal of another navigator, Henry Fleet, who sailed up the Potomac twelve years later to the present site of Washington, establishes the fact that buffalo were plentiful there. "As for deer, buffaloes, bears, turkeys," Fleet recorded, "the woods do swarm with them."

These two—Argoll's and Fleet's—are the earliest and among the most interesting records of buffalo in the East. There are many others, most of them of considerably later date.

Except in the extreme South, the bands of shaggy ruminants which crossed the mountains year after year along the deep-worn roads trodden out by the hoofs of the herds wandered only occasionally down into the tidewater regions. Hence the earliest settlements, clinging precariously to the coast and hemmed in by a vast mysterious forest guarded by savage foes, saw and heard little of the "American Behemoth," as William Byrd of Virginia called it. As soon, however, as the first explorers and hunters were able to push inland a little way, records of the buffalo became more frequent.

In New York the animals certainly ranged as far eastward as the eastern end of Lake Erie and perhaps well beyond. Referring probably to the country south

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of Lake Ontario, Morton recorded in his *New English Canaan*, printed in 1637, that the Indians "have also made descriptions of great heards of well-grown beasts that live about the parts of this lake such as the Christian world hath not been made acquainted with. These Beasts are of the bignesse of a Cowe, their flesh being very good foode, their hides good lether, their fleeces very useful, being a kind of woole."

In Pennsylvania the "great heards" were even more numerous. An early settler who built his cabin close to a salt lick near the site of the present town of Clarion saw buffalo in such numbers that "he supposed there could not have been less than 2,000 in the neighbourhood of the spring"; and as late as 1773, when Philip Quigley settled in what is now Clinton County, the buffalo in that region "still numbered about 12,000."

Farther south, in Virginia and especially in the Piedmont country of the two Carolinas, where the forest was more open and where the magnificent parklike woodlands were interspersed with beautiful flower-spangled meadows rich with wild pea-vine and maiden cane, the daring white hunters who ventured inland from the coast or southward along the Appalachian valleys found the paths of the buffalo winding everywhere among the hills.

"When the first settlers of Duncan's Creek [in

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South Carolina] arrived from Pennsylvania," wrote John H. Logan who had talked with many of the pioneers, "and began to erect their cabins on that fertile stream, they found its valleys and hills abounding in buffaloes. . . . The old hunters killed great numbers of them every year solely for their skins and tongues; deer and wild turkeys were too abundant to make them [the buffalo] an object of pursuit for the sake of the flesh." It was in Logan's rare and fascinating volume that I discovered, too, one of the very few detailed accounts extant of a buffalo hunt east of the Appalachians.

"In the year 1760," he says, "a Mr. Graves, an old man, crossed the Wateree at Graves' Ford and formed a settlement in the present territory of Fairfield. When his people had kindled their campfires, soon after passing the river, he looked into the larder and announced to the company that their meal and meat were both entirely exhausted; 'but,' said he, 'as we crossed the river, I saw tracks in the paths, leading up from it into the woods, which must be those of the buffalo. Let the young men take their guns and waylay the trails and they will no doubt soon take up a fresh supply of meat.'

"Reuben Harrison, who was one of the party, immediately formed a hunting band, and going out, as di-

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rected, was not long in killing three fat buffaloes which they succeeded in bringing into the encampment. After cutting from their carcasses what was needed for their present necessities, the rest was divided into small pieces and spread upon a log, to cool during the night. The wolves, however, of the neighboring swamps, having got scent of it, surrounded the camp with the most hideous howlings, and when daylight came scarcely half of the game could be found."

These are a few records of buffalo in the East gleaned from the pages of some of the old chroniclers whose quaint and often vivid accounts enable us to reconstruct the splendid panorama of the America that was. When the last Eastern band marched back across the mountains, the first chapter of the epic of the buffalo was ended.

Precisely when that retreat took place nobody knows. The latest record for Pennsylvania seems to be 1810, the latest for Virginia about 1730, which is probably too early. James Adair, hunter, trader and historian of the Indians, notes in his book, published in 1775, that in South Carolina buffalo were then very rare because of the great numbers killed by white hunters merely for their tongues and marrow-bones. The last of which I have been able to find definite mention in the South-

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east was one killed in the early 1800's (the exact date not determined) near Brunswick, Georgia.

Beyond the mountains at the time of the Revolution the slaughter of the herds had barely begun. Daniel Boone looked down from the spurs of the Cumberland upon droves of buffalo like the cattle on a thousand hills. Where Nashville now stands the "long hunters" found the country "crowded with them." The best roads across the mountains were the buffalo roads and in many cases the railroads of today follow these ancient highways. Of the Blue Licks in Kentucky John Filson wrote in 1784: "The amazing herds of buffalo which resort thither, by their size and number, fill the traveller with amazement and terror, especially when he beholds the prodigious roads they have made from all quarters, as if leading to a populous city." Yet even in that game paradise the herds were as nothing compared with the incalculable hosts beyond the "Great River."

Draw a line on the map of North America from Syracuse, N. Y., to Washington, D. C.; thence southward to Brunswick on the Georgia coast; thence southwestward to the mouth of the Mississippi and on to the plains of northern Mexico; thence northward between the Rockies and the Pacific coast ranges twenty-five hundred miles to the Great Slave Lake in upper Canada; thence southeastward another twenty-five hundred

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miles, bringing your line just south of the Great Lakes back again to the starting point at Syracuse, N. Y. You will have enclosed an area of about three million square miles, and over all that territory the buffalo roamed in numbers which have probably never been equaled by any other big game animal since man came to dwell upon the earth.

Today the only wild buffalo left are those in the United States park areas and the Wood Buffalo Park in Canada. Inevitable or not, the wiping out of that colossal concourse of great beasts was probably the bloodiest animal massacre ever perpetrated in the world. The grim story has been told often. Here only the story of the buffalo in the East has been outlined because nothing else so strikingly illustrates the richness of the wild-life heritage we have squandered as the fact, unknown to most people, that buffalo herds once ranged our Eastern woods.

The Cherokees of the Southern mountains called the buffalo Yann'sa or Yun'su, the Very Great Bull. He was the king of the splendid virgin woodlands through which the Cherokees hunted, but for many years after the white man's coming he shared his kingship with another forest-monarch—Awi Agwa, the Great Deer, as the Indians called the stately round-

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horned elk or wapiti. To many people the former existence of elk in the East is as surprising as the fact that buffalo once dwelt there; yet the elk, with a total range almost as large as that of the bison, was found in pioneer times from the Laurentian Hills of eastern Canada to the uplands of Georgia.

The old chroniclers give many vivid glimpses of this noblest of all the deer in the days when America was young. "They usually accompany the Buffaloes," wrote Mark Catesby in 1731, "with whom they range in droves in the upper and remote parts of Carolina." "The Elk is a Monster of the Venison sort," the early traveler, Lawson, decided; and still earlier, in 1605, Captain George Weymouth, in his *Voyage to Virginia*, mentions great deer "with horns and broad ears which we take to be Olkes or Loshes." "Within the memory of many persons now living," Dr. B. S. Barton wrote in 1806, "the droves of Elks which used to frequent the salines west of the river Susquehanna in Pennsylvania were so great that for 5 or 6 miles leading to the 'licks' the paths of these animals were as wide as many of the great public roads of our country."

Such references might be multiplied. The Eastern elk seem to have survived longest in Pennsylvania where the last of the species was killed near Clarion in 1867. Again, as in the case of the buffalo, the elk

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of the East were only a fraction of the unnumbered host whose domain extended from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande and from the Great Slave Lake to the Great Smokies. Throughout that broad empire the grandest of the antlered tribes flourished for countless centuries until the red hunters who killed only to satisfy their need were supplanted by white hunters who killed for the love of killing. Today probably one hundred thousand elk survive—perhaps one one hundredth of the original number—mainly in national or state forests and parks.

North of the wapiti's realm and to a considerable extent overlapping it, another notable member of the deer kind, the moose, filled the early explorers with amazement.

“The most admirable Creature,” says Oldmixon in his *History of New England*, “is the Mose, which Josseline thus describes, in his *New England Rarities*: ‘Tis about 12 Feet high, with four Horns, and broad Palms, some of 12 Feet from the Tip of one Horn to that of the other. His Body is about the Bigness of a Bull’s, his Neck resembles a Stag’s. His Tail longer than a Buck’s, and his Flesh very grateful. He shoots his Horns every four Years.’ ”

A “Rarity” indeed was that 12-foot “Mose” of Josseline [Josselyn], but actually the moose was so abundant

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in New England in the early days that, according to Kalm, one was "surprised" by a gentleman "in his grounds within a few miles of Boston." Today—though, thanks chiefly to the remoteness of its principal range, moose are still numerous in Canada and in a segment of United States soil west of the Great Lakes—it is to be found in New England only in the northern parts, it is extinct in Pennsylvania where formerly it existed in considerable numbers, and unless some which were liberated in the Adirondacks still survive, it is extinct also in New York where the last wild moose was killed about 1861.

When old Bill Long, born in 1820, died in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, he was said, according to W. J. McKnight, who is quoted by E. T. Seton, to have killed in that general region fifty panthers, one hundred and twenty-five elk, two hundred wildcats, four hundred bears, two thousand wolves and three thousand five hundred deer. The story may very well be true and the list probably gives a pretty accurate idea of the relative abundance of game east of the Mississippi at that time. Deer, you will notice, exceed all the others combined. This, of course, was the whitetailed deer, and we have the whitetail with us still. But if you who can still see a buck now and then are in-

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clined to boast that you live in a good deer country, take a look at that part of our wild-life patrimony as it was when we took it from the Indian.

“Deer were so numerous,” says Logan of South Carolina, “that large herds of them were scarcely ever out of sight of the pioneer even while standing in his cabin door. They were more numerous than hares are at present [1859]. . . . Old Anthony Park, who settled on lands now embraced in the District of Newberry, used to assert that a man could at that time stand in his own door and kill more game than would be sufficient for the support of two families.” Thomas Ashe speaks in 1682 of “deer of which there is such infinite Herds that the whole country seems but one continued Park.” To Charlestown (Charleston) the traders’ caravans brought their burdens of skins over the buffalo roads and the old Indian trails that made a connecting system of highways through all the vast wilderness of the South and the old Southwest; and in 1731, apparently one of the peak years of the trade, there were stored in the Charlestown warehouses nearly a quarter of a million deerskins.

Northward and in the great central woodland one finds the same story of an almost incredible abundance. In New England, according to Morton’s *New English Canaan*, one hundred deer could be found “within the

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compass of a mile." The thirty-five hundred killed by Bill Long in Pennsylvania—he might have been called Bloody Bill—are approached by the 2,555 score of Thomas Meacham who died in 1850 at Hopkinton, N. Y. At Medina, Ohio, in 1818, according to Seton who quotes the Ohio Historical Collections, one day's deer-drive netted three hundred deer. In Kentucky shortly before the Revolution Kaspar Mansker and a party of "long hunters" killed such vast numbers of deer and so many buffalo and elk that they could not pack all the hides into camp and one of them carved on the trunk of a poplar where for many years the words were legible: "2300 deerskins lost; ruination, by God!"

What the buffalo was to the horse Indians of the Plains the white-tailed deer was, in large measure, to the forest Indians of the East. Many of them lived on it and but for the deer certain tribes probably could not have lived; yet until the white man came the "infinite herds" grew not less. Then the slaughter began.

In 1853 Thoreau wrote: "Minot says his mother told him she had seen a deer come down the hill behind her house and cross the road and meadow in front. Thinks it may have been eighty years ago." In other words, deer had become so rare in the region around Concord that it was worth while to record one seen

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four-score years before. Where Bill Long killed his thirty-five hundred a time came when there were no more deer to kill. Where Logan said that deer were more numerous than rabbits, a wild deer hasn't been seen in half a century.

We are bringing the deer back now—some of them. Better than any other American big game animal the whitetail adapts itself to civilization, and now there are deer again where Bill Long hunted and Thoreau, if he were living today, could see wild deer not far from Concord. In fact there are deer today in some regions where there were none in the old days.

Weigh against these gains, chiefly along the northern and western fringes of its range, the fact that, over at least a third of the vast area in the United States where formerly it abounded, the white-tailed deer is extinct or practically extinct. Probably, in the case of the deer, about a hundredth part of our patrimony remains to us. When one thinks of the myriads of the prong-horned antelope, for instance, of which less than a thousandth part remains, one feels that we should be thankful for the deer.

Next to the deer the most important animal of the early American woods was the black bear. Bears were so abundant in the East that "a hunter of ordinary skill

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could kill in a single season enough to make him some three thousand pounds of bacon." "When John Duncan built his house in a canebrake on the creek that bears his name," wrote Logan, "he opened a path some fifteen paces long through the cane to the stream for the convenience of getting water. In after years he related to his children that there was scarcely a minute of the day that he could not see some wild animal moving stealthily up or down the creek across that path." A fair proportion of these were bears, one of which one evening "threw him for a moment into a great fright by springing over his leg into the cabin."

In the lives of the forest Indians the black bear played an essential part. One of the most interesting facts about it has generally been overlooked. We like to think that we have partly atoned for our bloody record as wild-life destroyers by originating the conservation movement in America. As a matter of fact, the people of at least one Indian nation, the powerful Creeks who held most of what is now Georgia and Alabama, were centuries ahead of us.

In parts of the Creek country game was apparently not so abundant as in most of the Indian lands and therefore large tracts known as "Beloved Bear Grounds" were set aside where the bears could not be killed except at certain stated seasons. Most of the In-

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dians were conservationists in the sense that they killed no more than they needed, but the Beloved Bear Grounds of the Creek Muskhogee probably provide the earliest illustrations of systematic wild-life conservation in America.

Unlike his bigger cousin, the grizzly, once the arrogant lord of the West but now almost or quite extinct as a wild animal in the United States, the black bear seems seldom to have been dangerous even in the days before he had learned the power of the white man's rifle. Jeremy Belknap, however, in his history of New Hampshire, published in 1792, mentions two instances —one at Moultonborough and one at Suncooke River —in which children were carried off by bears; and some of the Indian hunting practices suggest that in the early days the black bear was not so timid an animal as it is now.

The same thing may have been true of the wolf. In the family history (manuscript) of a neighbor of mine the following incident is recorded:

“Joshua Lockwood from the county of Kent, England, settled in the town of Dorchester about sixteen miles from Charleston on the Ashley River in South Carolina. He married Mary Lee—had a family—and died about 1750 at Dorchester. In carrying his remains for burial in Charleston, the cortege was attacked by

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a flock of wolves which compelled them to bury his remains by the roadside about nine miles from Charleston.”

Wolves abounded in that wild-life paradise of the early days, living principally on the deer and favored in certain regions by the Indian belief that any gun or bow used in killing a wolf—the hunting dog of Kanati, the Master of Game—would be worthless thereafter. The pioneer New Englanders killed them with fish-hooks, according to Josseline, binding four mackerel hooks together and covering them with wool and tallow. Belknap says that Amherst, New Hampshire, was so infested that the inhabitants turned out en masse and kept up so incessant a firing of guns and beating of drums that “in the following night the wolves quitted the swamp [which was their stronghold] with a dismal howling.”

When smallpox, brought by the whites, decimated the Indians of New Jersey, Kalm tells us in 1748, “the wolves then came, attracted by the stench of so many corpses, in such great numbers that they devoured them all, and even attacked the poor sick Indians in their huts.” On “Bloody Bill’s” long list of victims in Pennsylvania, it will be remembered, the wolves, two thousand in number, were second only to the deer. Lawson, who traveled through Carolina in 1709, describes the

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nocturnal cries and howlings of the wild animals, chiefly wolves, in the swamps of the Santee as terrific beyond description.

In the teeming wilderness of the young America there were no four-footed killers so formidable to the white newcomers as the tiger of Asia or the lion of Africa. The thrill of danger in that vast forest which began at the Atlantic shore-line and spread league upon league in endless waves of green beyond the farthest ramparts of the Appalachians came mainly from human foes, for in that forest the finest savage warriors that the world has ever known fought bravely and sternly to keep the marvelous land that was rightfully theirs. Yet there are too many tales of perilous adventure with wild beasts for all of them to have been false.

In many of these stories the big and powerful cat generally known as the panther (the "painter" of the early backwoodsmen) and called mountain lion in the West today, is the chief actor. Puma or cougar is a better name for him, for he is neither lion nor true panther; but under whatever name he was known, it was his unseen and ghostly presence in the shadowy forest, watching with pale resentful eyes from some leafy ambush or gliding soundlessly along the dim cane-

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brake trails, which, next to the Indian menace, kept the hunter ceaselessly alert.

Koe Ishto, the Cat of God, the brave and warlike Chickasaws called him; to the Muskhogeans he was Katalgar, greatest of all the wild hunters, and in order that their boys might acquire something of his skill in woodcraft they were made to sleep on panther skins. From southern Canada almost to the tip of South America the panther ranged at will and in the old days the eastern North American forest formed one of his best hunting grounds. The buffalo bull and the great-horned elk could fight him off, but the "infinite herds" of the deer supported him in affluence and probably, too, the innumerable flocks of wild turkeys contributed largely to his lordly maintenance.

He survives still in swiftly decreasing numbers in certain regions of the West and in Florida; but from the greater part of his wide kingdom Koe Ishto, the Cat of God, has gone forever, with Yann'sa the Very Great Bull and Awi Agwa the Elk and Waya the Wolf. One hears rumors now and then of panthers in the East, but, north of Florida, few if any of these are authentic. Perhaps his going was necessary, for we haven't yet discovered that the beauty and wildness of a superb forest-creature entitle it to a place on the earth. But there was no necessity for the indiscriminate mas-

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sacre of America's harmless big game, the wholesale squandering of that bounteous wild-life patrimony which the Indian left to us.

Probably no one knew the real red man better than James Adair, for forty years before the Revolution a dweller in the red man's unspoiled wilderness. "They say," Adair wrote of his Indian friends, "they have often seen a panther in the woods, with a brace of large fat bucks at once, near a cool stream; but that they had more sense than to value the beast on account of his large possessions: on the contrary, they hated his bad principles, because he would needlessly destroy the good things he could not use himself."

CHAPTER EIGHT

Wonder of the Air



THE immense herds of buffalo, the myriads of deer, the millions of antelope and elk and other four-footed creatures, living their lives with room and air and sustenance for all until the destroyer came, represent only part of that paradise of wild life over which the Indian stood guard. Equally marvelous was the virgin continent's vast store of feathered game.

From Ontario to Florida, from Cape Cod to the Rocky Mountains, wild turkeys roamed in countless droves at the time of the white man's coming. On spring mornings when the turkey-cocks of the Atlantic seaboard greeted the rising sun, the mighty sound of their gobbling rolled on over the Piedmont hills, over the cloudy tops of the Appalachians, over the shadowy woodlands of the great mid-continental valley, to the edge of the prairies and beyond. It must have been one of the grandest bird-choruses ever heard in the world

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—that swelling wave of jubilant sound sweeping westward with the morning light across half the width of a continent. “They begin at early dawn and continue till sun rise,” wrote William Bartram the naturalist as late as 1773. “The high forests ring with the noise . . . the watchword being caught and repeated from one to another for hundreds of miles around; insomuch that the whole country is for an hour or more in an universal shout.”

Long before the *Mayflower* dropped anchor off Plymouth Rock, René de Laudonnière, cruising along the coast of Carolina in 1564, saw wild turkeys on his very first landing; and long before de Laudonnière, Cortez’s steel-clad Spaniards, marching up from Vera Cruz to the conquest of the Aztec empire, found in the upland forests along their way wild turkeys which Oviedo, the first naturalist to give an account of the bird, described as “a kind of Peacock.”

From Mexico comes one of the most dramatic illustrations of the wild turkey’s former abundance. The great Aztec emperor Montezuma, then at the height of his magnificence, maintained for his pleasure and that of his wives one of the largest zoological gardens in the world; and so abundant were turkeys in the Aztec realm that it is said they were fed in large numbers every day to the wild beasts in the emperor’s

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menagerie. It is a fascinating item if true, and it may very well be true, for in the narratives of many of the early explorers from Canada to Yucatan one finds evidence of wild turkeys in almost incredible plenty.

When De Soto's army reached the country of the Cherokee in upper South Carolina, one Indian town, according to the old chronicler, presented the distinguished visitor with seven hundred wild turkeys. More than a century and a half later John Lawson saw flocks of five hundred in the forests of the Carolina tide-water; and in 1634 William Wood wrote of the Massachusetts turkeys: "of these sometimes there will be forty, three-score and a hundred of a flocke," adding that although they "can runne as fast as a Dogge and flye as well as a Goose," hunters who follow them by their "tracts" in the snow may kill ten or a dozen in half-a-day.

The wild turkey of those early times was not the astute bird that he became when relentless persecution by the white hunters forced sophistication upon him. By stuffing a turkey skin to resemble a living gobbler and hiding behind a log, an Indian hunter could lure a feeding flock so close that he could often seize a victim with his hands. With domestic turkeys bringing forty or fifty cents a pound today and wild turkeys unobtainable at any price, it is almost ludicrous

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now to consider what the wild birds, fit provender for a king, brought in the early markets.

In Hartford in 1711 a householder could buy a wild turkey for one shilling four pence, and in Northampton from 1730 to 1735 the prevailing price was a penny and a half per pound, dressed. One can imagine the indignation of New England housewives when in 1766 the cost of prime wild turkeys rose to two and a half pence a pound, and their alarm and dismay when in 1788 the unprecedented and outrageous price of three pence a pound was demanded by the market hunters.

Abundant as wild turkeys were in the East, they were even more numerous west of the Appalachians. For long years after the inroads of the white hunters had thinned their cohorts along the Atlantic seaboard the great flocks roamed in undiminished numbers, in company with droves of deer and buffalo, through the vast mid-continental forest on both sides of the Mississippi.

“The unsettled parts of the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana,” the great ornithologist Audubon wrote in 1840, “an immense extent of country to the northwest of these districts, upon the Mississippi and Missouri, and the vast regions drained by these rivers from their confluence to Louisiana . . . are the most abundantly supplied with this magnificent

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bird." In Kentucky in the early 1800's one could buy a whole twelve-pound turkey for the three pence which, twenty years earlier, was the price per pound in New England; and Audubon notes that a twenty-five- or thirty-pounder "was considered well sold when it brought a quarter of a dollar."

Over most of the enormous expanse of country outlined by Audubon as the heart and center of the wild turkey's broad domain you will listen in vain for the gobble of a wild turkey-cock today. What happened to the untold thousands of splendid birds that once roamed through these shadowy forests and added their numberless voices to the exultant chorus of the turkey-cocks rolling westward across the continent with the morning light? How was this great natural resource destroyed? The question is easily answered.

Thus in the 1830's Frederick Gerstaecker, returning to Germany after a hunting trip in the West (where, he said, "flocks of wild turkeys filled the woods as thick as partridges in Germany"), told his countrymen: "The chase in the United States is rapidly on the decline, for the American hunter spares nothing, and . . . a war of extermination has been waged." Throughout the turkey's vast range in this country the war of extermination went on as the white man dis-

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placed the red; and today only a fragment of the original multitude survives.

The wild turkey myriads, shaking the forests with their joyous salute to the ascending sun, were among the marvels of the early American woods. To realize in all its wonder the panorama of the young America's bird-life you must lift your thoughts to the broad blue roads of the sky. Probably no more splendid spectacle of the kind has ever been witnessed in the world than the thronged airways of America in the days before the white man came to shatter the winged hosts.

Down from the northern breeding grounds with each returning fall swept feathered legions whose numbers we cannot even estimate today—millions of birds of many kinds, from giant whooping cranes and magnificent trumpeter swans to godwits, avocets, phalaropes, snipes, plovers and other lesser wildfowl. Day after day the blue sky over the northern prairies was streaked and stippled with the unending multitude of the migrating hosts; night after night the bugle-notes of the cranes, like “the chiming church-bells of a hundred villages,” and the clarion-calls of the swans, mellowed by distance to a silvery music as of flutes and

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flageolets, floated down to the hordes of buffalo, elk and wild horses on the plain below.

These great ones, with their eight- or nine-foot spread of snowy wings, were the royalty of the air. Even more numerous were the scarcely less regal whistling swans, the wild geese both gray and white, the ducks of many different kinds, the plovers and other shorebirds, the Eskimo curlews whose myriads seemed incalculable as the leaves of summer. With the game birds, too, came squadrons and fleets of birds of prey—big rough-legged hawks moving in far-flung armies many miles wide from flank to flank; eagles both white-headed and golden; broad-winged and red-tailed hawks; lightning-swift duck hawks or peregrine falcons rocketing downward at times to snatch a victim from the armies passing below. Flock after flock, army after army—some of them only a few hundred feet above the earth, others a thousand feet high, still others perhaps so far up in the blue that the keenest eye could scarcely discern them—they streamed southward before the might of on-coming winter.

The journey was not as a rule continuous. Coming down from the northern tundras by diverging routes which would spread them all over the southern part of the United States, the migrating hosts made many stops along the way.

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Feeding multitudes crowded the lakes and rivers of the mid-continental valley, the littoral waters of the Pacific, the inlets, bays and marshes along the Atlantic from Long Island to Florida. When Captain Amidas, the early voyager, landed on the coast of North Carolina, "such a flock of cranes (the most part white) arose under us, with such a cry, redoubled by many echoes, as if an army of men had shouted together." Wherever on the Western prairies the migrating multitudes saw the sheen of shallow water below them, squadron after squadron would drop down until lake and marsh were packed with birds: banks of trumpeter swans and great white geese like drifts of snow; big gray honkers and cacklers in thousands or tens of thousands; mallards, pintails, shovelers, redheads, canvasbacks, bluebills and other ducks; acres of coots and perhaps hundreds of acres of curlews.

Grandest of all in flight and stateliest when standing at rest were the great white whooping cranes. Nesting in thousands in prairie marshes and sloughs from Iowa to Mackenzie, the whoopers gathered in vast armies in the fall to spend the winter in a broad strip of territory bordering the Gulf from Florida to Central Mexico.

"In the month of December, 1811," wrote the naturalist Thomas Nuttall, "while leisurely descending on

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the bosom of the Mississippi in one of the trading boats of that period, I had an opportunity of witnessing one of these vast migrations of the whooping cranes, assembled by many thousands from all the marshes and impassable swamps of the North and West. The whole continent seemed as if giving up its quota of the species to swell the mighty host. Their flight took place in the night, down the great aerial valley of the river. . . . The clangor of these numerous legions passing along high in the air seemed almost deafening . . . and as the vocal call continued nearly throughout the whole night without intermission, some idea may be formed of the immensity of the numbers now assembled on their annual journey to the regions of the South."

Vast as were the hosts of migrating wildfowl of many kinds which crowded the north-and-south airways in spring and fall, there was another winged host which was vaster still.

Travelers in the early American woods would sometimes hear a sound as of distant thunder. This would grow rapidly louder, the light would begin to fade, the rumble would become a roar like that of an approaching tornado. Looking up, the wayfarer would see, through openings in the forest-roof, dark flecks

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hurtling across the sky. These would increase in number until they formed a seemingly solid mass obscuring the heavens; the woods would darken as though night were at hand; the air would become suddenly chill; the roar would grow so great that even men standing near together could scarcely hear each other when they shouted with all the power of their lungs.

For hours, perhaps all day, this would continue. The wild pigeons were passing.

The story of the passenger pigeon is the most astounding in the drama of America's wild life. Words failed the men who saw and then tried to describe the miracle of the feathered hordes which surged on their irregular migrations up and down and back and forth across the continent from Mackenzie to Texas and from the Atlantic to the Plains.

When the pigeons came, there seemed to be, as one early observer in Massachusetts expressed it, "neyther beginning nor ending, length or breadth of these Millions of Millions." They were never as abundant in the East as in the great midland valley, yet in Pennsylvania, for instance, Kalm tells of a single flock which covered every tree for seven miles, broke off limbs the size of a man's thigh, and uprooted smaller trees with their weight. Where the vast flocks nested thousands of acres of forest were killed as though swept

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by fire. In 1805 John Lyman estimated that there were twenty million pigeons then nesting in the valleys along the Alleghany River. Sixty-five years later they seemed to have suffered little diminution, for in 1870 there was a nesting in Pennsylvania forty miles long and a half-mile to two miles wide.

Alexander Wilson, the famous ornithologist, described a flock which passed over him in Kentucky about 1806 and which he estimated to be two hundred and forty miles in length and to contain more than 2,230,000,000 birds. Incredibly as this figure appears, modern naturalists, studying Wilson's method of calculation and comparing the evidence of many other observers, believe his computation to have been conservative. In 1813 Audubon saw near Louisville, Kentucky, a flight which continued for three successive days. He estimated the number of pigeons passing overhead, on a front a mile wide (the actual front was much wider) in the space of three hours, at 1,115,136,000. How many passed in the three days cannot be guessed. More than half a century later (1866) W. Ross King described a flight at Fort Mississauga, Canada, which obscured the sun for fourteen hours and which averaged, he believed, three hundred miles in length by a mile in width.

One can only gape at these figures. But each account

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is confirmed by scores of others, too numerous to cite here, and there are men still living who can bear witness to their truth. Near Petoskey, Michigan, in 1878, the last of the truly tremendous nestings of the wild pigeons took place. For at least forty years the systematic slaughter of the birds for commercial purposes had been proceeding, thousands of market hunters following the flocks from state to state, killing old and young in their nesting places and shipping tons of the birds to the Eastern markets. Yet, in spite of the enormous number already killed in this way, the Petoskey nesting of 1878 is said to have extended forty miles and to have covered more than one hundred thousand acres of forest.

There for many weeks the "pigeoners" held bloody carnival, slaughtering such incredible numbers that Professor H. B. Roney, who witnessed part of the butchery, estimated the death-toll at one billion birds. Through all those weeks the railroad shipments from Petoskey averaged fifty barrels of pigeons per day, thirty to forty dozen old birds and about fifty dozen young ones being packed in each barrel. Besides the millions thus shipped from this and other great nestings, no one knows how many died slowly in the woods of their wounds or how many millions of young perished of starvation in their nests.

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Efforts to outlaw the hideous trade were unavailing. There was money in it and those who protested against its cruelty and foretold its inevitable result were scoffed at. At last, in 1895, the firm of market-men in St. Louis who were the largest dealers in the United States complained: "We have had no wild pigeons for two seasons; the last we received were from Siloam Springs, Ark. We have lost all track of them and our netters are lying idle."

Today it is practically certain that not one passenger pigeon remains alive in the world. For years a large reward was offered for an authentic record of the bird, but it has never been collected. When, in September, 1914, a captive female in the Cincinnati Zoo died of old age, the tale of those "Millions of Millions" came to an end.

Some people believe that after the great killings in Michigan the last survivors of this beautiful and gentle race, realizing that only death awaited them in their own land, rose en masse and disappeared forever into the chill immensity of the frozen North. Some say that they fled to South America and dwell there now; others maintain that they have found a new home in Australia; still others believe that, seeking sanctuary beyond the seas, the last great flock was

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overwhelmed by a hurricane far from land and thus perished. No naturalist shares any of these theories.

The plain truth is that in the greatest bird-butchery ever known in the world—a bloody and cruel massacre of old and young carried on systematically with guns and nets and fire and even cannon from the 1840's to the 1890's—the myriads of the passenger pigeon, probably the most abundant game bird that ever existed anywhere, were wiped from the face of the earth by civilized man. What do we mean, one wonders, by "civilized man"? Peter Kalm, a traveler in New Jersey and Pennsylvania two hundred years ago, wrote: "While these birds are hatching their young, or while the latter are not yet able to fly, the savages or Indians in North America are in the habit of never shooting or killing them, nor of allowing others to do so, pretending that it would be a great pity on their young, which would in that case have to starve to death."

The white man didn't care whether they starved to death or not. He destroyed all the billions of the passenger pigeon. The immense multitudes of whooping cranes described by Nuttall were wiped out ruthlessly; on the whole continent not more than three hundred of these splendid birds exist today. The trumpeter swan is now one of the rarest of American wild crea-

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tures, only a few score of individuals surviving. The whistling swan still lives, but in greatly diminished numbers; the wild ducks now in existence are only a fraction of the incalculable hosts that America once had. The Eskimo curlew and the great auk, formerly existing in millions, have been exterminated.

The white man—the incredible contradictory being out of whose soul could come such beauty as the *Ode to a Nightingale*—killed and killed and killed. He soaked the continent with blood; nowhere else on the planet has so monstrous a massacre of wild life been achieved. He looted and riddled and ruined America's treasure-house of living wonders. When his work was done, the great herds were gone from the prairies and the sky above America was empty.

CHAPTER NINE

Tsali of the Great Smokies



THEY poured through the passes of the Blue Ridge—those conquerors and spoilers of a continent which was one of the Lord's marvels. Brave men, brave women, carrying the torch of civilization, the torch that destroys even while it illumines. Pontiac fought them and failed, Tecumseh fought them and died fighting; swiftly they pressed on, carrying the frontier to the prairies of the West. We shall follow them there presently. But first there is a story to be told, a story which has lain hidden all these years among the peaks and valleys of the Great Smoky Mountains along the border-line of North Carolina and Tennessee. It is the story of Tsali, an Indian.

When you go into the Great Smokies from the little town of Bryson City, North Carolina, which is one of the gateways to the new Great Smoky Mountains National Park, you will pass through the sixty-three-

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thousand-acre reservation of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee tribe. This will be a surprise to the average traveler, who supposes that in order to find Indians you have to go to the West. It is true that the main body of the Cherokee nation now live in the West; but there are more than three thousand Cherokees in and about the valley of Oconaluftee, under the eastern rampart of the Smokies, and, in certain respects, they are among the most interesting Indians in the United States.

From the beginning they have been there, still dwelling in their old homeland, planting their little farms in the mountain coves and beside the clear streams, their presence unknown to the vast majority of the conquering race which swept long ago over the red man's country and drove him far beyond the Mississippi. They go to the white man's school maintained for them by the Government; they have learned the white man's ways and his language and, except on special occasions, they wear the white man's garb. But some of them keep in their hearts the red man's ancient lore and maintain the red man's customs; and for many people they will be among the most interesting features of the great new national park which surrounds their reservation on three sides.

It is because of Tsali that they are there; and Tsali's

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story, in its valor, its pity and its triumph, is surely one of the great true stories of America.

Tsali isn't in it at the beginning. One day a little Cherokee boy was playing on the bank of the Chestatee River in upper Georgia. Something in the crystal-clear water attracted his attention, and he stooped and picked it up—a yellow pebble about as large as the end of his thumb. It was a pretty thing and, instead of throwing it at the redbirds twittering in the alders, he carried it to his mother in her cabin a little back from the stream.

The woman looked at it closely, washed it in water and rubbed it with her fingers. Then she put it carefully away in a safe place. On her next visit to the settlement she took it with her and showed it to a white man.

The white man stared at it with an excitement which he concealed quickly. After some dickering for diplomatic purposes, he bought it from her, probably for much less than it was worth.

Nobody knew it then; but a little Indian boy playing beside a river had blown his nation up as though with dynamite.

The yellow pebble was the beginning—or rather the beginning of the end. Long before then the decline

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of the Cherokee nation had begun. When the white man first came to America, the Cherokees, a branch of the virile Iroquoian stock, had been the proudest and most powerful Indian nation in the South. The mountaineers of their race, their central strongholds were in the wild and picturesque region where the Appalachians reach their loftiest heights in the Great Smokies and the southern Blue Ridge. Thence, like the golden eagles of the Smoky crags, their war-parties ranged far and wide, so that in the heyday of their power they claimed lordship from the Ohio and Tennessee on the north and west, almost to the Atlantic seaboard.

But gradually, as the white settlements spread inland from the coast, this red empire had dwindled. Gradually the white man's rifle in war and the white man's guile in peace had broken the Cherokees' strength and taken the Cherokees' lands. At the time—1815—when the little Indian boy picked up the yellow pebble, they held an area somewhat larger than the present state of Massachusetts, comprising the beautiful mountain country of western North Carolina, northern Georgia, northern Alabama and eastern Tennessee. This, the last remnant of their ancient wide domain, had been guaranteed to them by solemn treaty, forever.

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The yellow pebble that was really a nugget of gold turned that treaty into a scrap of paper.

News of the discovery spread like wildfire. There was gold in the Cherokee lands! By fair means or foul, the Cherokees must be dispossessed. For many years they had been a peaceful, well-behaved, industrious people, living quietly on their little farms, where their cabins were like those of the white man, advancing rapidly in civilization and enlightenment. They gave no trouble to anyone, and no just complaint could be brought against them. Nevertheless, within four years, all their lands east of the Chestatee were taken from them.

Then, in 1828, gold was found again—this time between the Chestatee and the Smokies; and in the same year, Andrew Jackson was elected President of the United States.

It is doubtful which was the blacker omen. Whatever else he was, Andrew Jackson was a good hater where Indians were concerned; and these Indians needed not hatred but a friend.

All around the border of the Cherokee realm the carrion crows were gathering. All around the rim of that country the smell of gold was in the white man's nostrils. From far off he could see in his imagination

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the glitter of gold, where the peaks of the Smokies and the Blue Ridge upreared toward the sky. Gold! And nothing in the way except a broken tribe of Indians. Nothing in the way except a scrap of paper—a scrap of paper on which a great civilized nation had solemnly pledged its word.

There were casuists then, as now, and where there is gold, a way can always be found. Through chicanery and force, with less than one-sixth of them consulted, a new treaty was imposed upon the Cherokees, requiring them to surrender their entire homeland for the sum of five million dollars and submit to wholesale deportation to the West.

Tsali, on his little farm among the mountains, heard only echoes of the storm. Under the leadership of their chief Guwisguwi (Wild Swan), whose white name was John Ross, the Cherokees protested against this great wrong. They were not altogether friendless. Daniel Webster and Henry Clay spoke for them, with Edward Everett of Massachusetts and Henry Wise of Virginia. Davy Crockett of Tennessee, frontiersman and Indian fighter, rose in the National House. The new treaty, he told his fellow-congressmen, was unjust, cruel and dishonest. He could not vote for it and keep his honor; and if his constituents felt otherwise, they knew what they could do.

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General Wool, commanding the Federal troops already concentrated in the Cherokee country, wrote to Edward Everett about the hordes of "white men who, like vultures, are watching, ready to pounce upon their prey and strip them of everything they have." The work was too ugly for General Wool; he was relieved at his own request. General Dunlap, in command of Tennessee troops sent to aid in dispossessing the Cherokees, stood it as long as he could and then exploded. In a fiery speech to his men, he declared he could not stain the honor of his State by taking part in an outrageous crime.

Nothing availed. Martin Van Buren, who had now become President, was disposed to allow the Cherokees a little more time. But the vultures were impatient. The Indians were helpless—they had already been disarmed. There was not only gold in the Cherokee mountains, but there were rich Indian farms in the coves and valleys, and cattle and horses to be had for the taking. It was whispered, too, that if the Indian graves were dug open, valuable silver ornaments could be taken from the corpses thus exhumed. So, one spring morning, infantry, cavalry and artillery moved into the Cherokee country until the force there totaled seven thousand men.

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Tsali saw them come in: the marching troops and the gleaming bayonets and the cannon—saw, too, the vultures, the outlaws, the white scum who followed close behind the soldiers and the flags. You can picture him, his eagle-face stern as one of the golden eagles of the Smokies, gazing down from the high mountainside at the long column winding through the pass below. Probably he thought longingly of the days before the Cherokees' power was broken—the days of Aganstata, known as the Great Warrior; of Kalanu the Raven; of Atta-kulla-kulla the Wise.

Those days were gone. You couldn't fight rifles and cannon with arrows and blow-guns. Yet Tsali did not believe, few of the Cherokees believed, that the thing of which men talked would really happen. So great a wrong was inconceivable. The scrupulous honor of the Cherokee was famous; in all its long dealing with the white man, the Cherokee nation had never broken its word. It was not believable that now, because the Indians were weak, the white man would break his pledged word to them, tear them from their homes, rob them of their lands and cabins, and drive them into exile.

So Tsali went back to his cabin and told his wife and young son not to worry; more soldiers had come, as the white men had threatened, but they would do

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nothing. The trouble would be settled and then the soldiers would march away.

Tsali worked in the fields of his farm, which was near the farms of his two older sons and his brother, and on other days he hunted deer and wild turkeys, for he was a great hunter and, although his rifle had been taken from him, he was skillful with the bow. Rumors came to him from time to time; the soldiers were building high pens or stockades at various places in the Cherokee country, and it was whispered that the Indians would be herded into these pens and kept there until they could be carried to the West.

Tsali's eyes flamed when he heard these rumors. He said little, however, and probably he still did not believe. Then suddenly came a flood of darker stories.

Indian families, at dinner in their cabins in the mountain coves or by the banks of the streams, had been startled by the sudden gleam of bayonets at the door. Men, women and children, they had been driven with blows and curses along the trail toward the nearest stockade. Close behind the troops, and sometimes with them, came the human vultures, the white scum, to pillage and loot. In many cases, before the soldiers had started their prisoners toward the stockade, these outlaws were ransacking the cabins, driving off the horses and cattle, even digging with ghoulish eagerness into

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the Indian graves to rob them of the silver pendants buried with the dead.

Tsali listened to the stories, his face more eagle-like than ever, his eyes ablaze. But the fire in his eyes would die quickly, to be supplanted by a look of bewilderment and despair.

He spoke seldom. Sitting in silence, he would gaze for hours at the blue mountains that he had known from his youth. When the soldiers came to his cabin he seemed to be in a dream. They already had with them, as prisoners, his brother and his two grown sons with their families; and Tsali rose like a man dazed and, motioning to his wife and young son to follow him, quietly took his place among the captives.

The way to the nearest stockade was long and steep. Tsali was an old man, but sinewy and strong; his wife, probably of about his own age, was unable to travel fast. A soldier prodded her with his bayonet to hasten her steps, and suddenly, at her cry of pain, Tsali's lethargy fell from him.

He sprang like a panther upon the nearest soldier, wresting his weapon from him. Almost in the same moment the other Cherokees attacked. Taken by surprise, the soldiers were at a disadvantage. There was a short, fierce struggle for the rifles, a smother of oaths, a scream of agony. When it was over, one soldier lay motionless

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on the ground, and the others were in flight along the trail.

By early summer of that year—1838—the general commanding the troops in the Cherokee country found that he had nearly seventeen thousand men, women and children in the pens. The round-up had been carried out ruthlessly and efficiently. Only one serious incident had occurred.

A Cherokee named Tsali, with his sons and his brother, had attacked the detachment taking them to the stockade, killed one of the soldiers, and escaped into the high mountains about Kuwahi (Clingman's Dome)—a region which is still one of the wildest parts of the area included in the Great Smoky National Park. Other Indians were managing to escape from the pens from time to time, and it was clear that the sooner the actual removal to the West could be accomplished, the better. Tsali and the other fugitives could be rounded up later.

You don't remember, in the history books that you studied in school and college, any mention of the "Cherokee Removal." It is time we were done with the kind of patriotism which suppresses parts of the record so that we may feel more virtuous than other people. At school you read Longfellow's *Evangeline*

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and grieved over the exile of the Acadians, driven from their homes in Nova Scotia by a ruthless British king. In weight of woe and suffering and in its toll of death, the exile of the Cherokees was far worse; and, though no poet has sung it and most history books omit it, there is probably no other episode in the story of America more full of pathos than this.

Tsali and his party, safe for the moment in a secret place near Kuwahi, where the search-parties could not find them, were spared that dreadful journey. In October, 1838, it began—the march of the Cherokee nation from their homeland into exile—the march of thirteen thousand broken-hearted men, women and children, released from the prison-pens to look for the last time on the beautiful land they had lost because the white man coveted it. Four thousand or more had already been taken from the pens and sent, under military supervision, on river-steamers down the Tennessee and the Mississippi and thence to the Indian Territory. So many of these had perished on the way as a result of mismanagement or indifference, that Chief Guwisguwi had begged that the rest be allowed to make the journey overland under their own chiefs.

It was the most tragic host that ever marched in America. Lee's gray battalions, straggling southward after Appomattox, were going home to the familiar

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scenes they loved, but from these unfortunates their homes and homeland had been taken. More than six hundred wagons had been assembled and these bore the sick and the aged and the smaller children. The others, organized in detachments of one thousand, with two Indian leaders in charge of each detachment, made the long journey mainly on foot.

It is idle to think of how, when they had left their beloved mountains behind them, they turned for one last look at the blue peaks which they would never see again. Necessarily, progress was slow, but the Tennessee was crossed, then the Cumberland, near Nashville.

From the beginning it was a march of death. Each day, men, women and children lay down by the way-side and died, sometimes ten and twenty in a day, among them Guwisguwi's wife, and Whitepath, one of the most noted chiefs. The Ohio was crossed near the mouth of the Cumberland, and the weary army passed slowly on through southern Illinois to reach the Mississippi opposite Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

It was now mid-winter, the river was full of drifting ice, and some of the detachments had to wait on the eastern bank until the channel cleared. Fifty years afterwards, James Mooney, historian of the Cherokees, talking with old men and women in the Indian Ter-

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ritory, who had come out in the Removal, found that "the lapse of over half a century had not sufficed to wipe out the memory of the miseries of that halt beside the frozen river, with hundreds of sick and dying penned up in wagons or stretched upon the ground, with only a blanket overhead to keep out the January blast."

Six months after the march of death had begun, the stricken army reached its destination. Including the losses of the contingent sent previously under military escort and those who died soon after their arrival in the West from sickness and exposure on the journey, the death toll of the Removal reached a total of more than four thousand, nearly one-fourth of the number who had started from the prison-pens.

That tragic march of a nation into exile is part of Tsali's story, as Tsali's story is part of the new Great Smoky National Park. Now his story moves swiftly to its triumphant end.

From the fine new highway just completed between Newfound Gap and Clingman's Dome—the highest road east of the Rockies—you can look down upon the virgin forests about the head of Deep Creek where no ax has yet struck. Somewhere in that shaggy wilderness, on the shoulder of Kuwahi, Tsali and his party

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had their refuge; and here and there along the main ridge of the Smokies, especially, amid the lofty peaks at the head of Ocona Luftee Valley, other small groups of Indians, who had escaped from the stockades, lay hidden. For a while the soldiers, fully occupied in guarding the captive thousands in the pens and getting the Removal to the West under way, left these refugees in comparative peace.

Then, when the pens had been emptied and the March of the Thirteen Thousand had begun, the general in command turned his attention to the fugitives. With his army of seven thousand men combing the ridges, their ultimate fate was inevitable; yet to find their hiding-places in the mountain fastnesses would not be easy; and as they had sworn to die rather than be transported, this last round-up might be a bloody business. The general thought of a plan.

He called into conference a white trader, William Thomas, who for twenty years had lived among the Cherokee and held their confidence. He was ready, he told Thomas, to let loose his whole seven thousand upon the fugitives and hunt them down relentlessly till the last fugitive had been taken or killed. But if Tsali and his party, who had shed blood, would come in and pay the penalty, he would call off the man-hunt,

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and try to obtain the Government's permission for the other fugitives to remain in their old homes.

By secret trails, which none knew except the Indians and their friends, Thomas went alone to Tsali's hiding-place. Tsali and the others, sitting around their fire, welcomed him. They listened in silence to the message the white man brought. Then Tsali rose.

He stood for a moment looking out over the valley below him, and the great mountains beyond—wave after wave of billowy, forest-clad ranges and rounded, cloud-capped peaks blue in that tenuous, dreamy haze which gives the Smokies their name. The homeland of the Cherokee. The beautiful land which had been theirs for centuries but was theirs no longer. He thought of the broken-hearted army of his kinsmen wending their slow way into exile—of his three sons watching him in silence, waiting for him to speak. One hope had been with him; that somehow some of the refugees hiding in the mountains might remain there until the soldiers had gone and that, in the end, these few might be allowed to live on in the country of their fathers to found a new Cherokee nation there and keep alive the ancient sacred ways. This hope had become a passion, an obsession. And now he could bring this great thing to pass!

He turned. For a moment his gaze rested on his

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sons. Two of them were grown men; they would be able to face the rifles. But the youngest, Wasituña, was only a boy. Tsali's eagle-face was haggard and old, but his eyes were the eyes of a victor.

"We will come," he said.

So he came in and gave himself up, and his three sons and his brother came with him. It seems certain that they knew what they were doing; the trader, Thomas, had told Tsali exactly what to expect. They were giving their lives for their people. They were dying in order that the Cherokee race might live on in its ancient home.

It took place at a spot well below the mouth of Ocona Luftee, probably just outside the boundary of the new Great Smoky National Park. The general spared the boy Wasituña because of his youth. Apparently, to impress upon the refugees still in the mountains the utter helplessness of the Indian race, a squad of Cherokee prisoners were compelled to do the shooting.

Tsali's eyes, as he faced the rifles, were victorious. Perhaps he saw the future—saw the vale of Ocona Luftee once more the home of his people, the smoke rising from hundreds of Indian cabins, the little children playing by the river, the small papooses riding

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on their mothers' backs, as you can see them in Ocona Luftee today.

Kuwahi, or Clingman's Dome, the highest peak of the Smokies, is the right place for a monument to Tsali. But his real monument is in Ocona Luftee and its tributary valleys, where the Eastern Cherokee have their little farms. The Western Band, in Oklahoma, descendants of the seventeen thousand sent out in the Removal, is, of course, much larger. But there are more than thirty-two hundred in the Eastern Band in the heart of the old home-country, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the fugitives who were allowed to come out of their hiding-places after Tsali and his party were shot.

Tsali, looking down at them from the Happy Hunting Ground—seeing, too, the protecting arm of the new national park shielding the Smoky wilderness from the destroyer—is probably content.¹¹

CHAPTER TEN

Hoofs on the Prairie



IT IS pleasant to think of Tsali and those others who gave their lives looking down with contented eyes on the vale of Ocona Luftee where they won, by courage and sacrifice, a victory for their people which endures even until today. But the larger drama sweeps on—westward beyond the mountains, across the great midland valley, to the edge of the Western Plains. And here, suddenly, a new picturesqueness, a new glamour clothes it; for here, where the forest ends and the wide spaces begin, the man on foot is supplanted by the most romantic of human figures—the man on horseback.

But here, in reality, is something more than a new picturesqueness, a new glamour. Here at the verge of the Plains we come face to face with one of the momentous events in the life of America—a revolution or transformation which began in the West before the

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first English settlements were planted on the Atlantic coast. Most strangely, when one considers its vast significance and epic sweep, its story has not yet been told except in scattered fragments here and there. Let us piece together these fragments gathered from many sources, for when they are brought together and viewed as a whole, the thing bursts suddenly upon the mind as one of the most dramatic—and neglected—chapters in the story of the continent.

You must fling your mind back three thousand years to the plains of Arabia and of Barbary, famous throughout the ancient world for their swift, high-mettled horses, the aristocrats of their race. Phoenician galleys, the commerce-carriers of the East, are plying the blue Mediterranean, sailing to Spain to trade with the colonies there. They take with them iron for weapons and tools, cloths and fine dyes for the making of garments, spices of Araby for the rich, and barley and fruits for the poor; and they take with them also to their colonies in Spain horses of the fine fiery-hearted desert strains for which Arabia and Barbary are famous.

Phoenicia perishes, long centuries pass. Swarms of Moorish warriors cross the Mediterranean and conquer Spain. With them come thousands more of those high-mettled Barb and Arab horses of the kind the Phoeni-

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cians brought. When, after seven centuries, the dusky invaders are expelled, the lithe and sinewy Arab-Barb horse, brought first by the Phoenician and then by the Moor, has become the horse of the Spaniard.

Three thousand miles away across the Atlantic, a vast undiscovered continent is waiting—waiting for an event which the future holds, a great event in which that horse will play a part.

This is the prelude. Now come home to America, to the American West.

Try to do a difficult thing. Try to think of a West absolutely without horses, a West in which not a single horse exists. In other respects it is the West of song and story and familiar fact; the West of the buffalo, the antelope, the grizzly bear, and the Plains Indian. But throughout the length and breadth of it there is not so much as one horse, and the Plains Indians—Pawnee, Comanche, Cheyenne, and all the others—move slowly, ploddingly, on foot.

That, as a matter of fact, was what the West was up to a comparatively short time ago—an utterly horseless land. It was an utterly horseless land for untold hundreds of centuries and the people who owned it, the Indian tribes of the West, were rather timid and peaceful pedestrians, who seldom wandered far beyond their own circumscribed tribal bounds. It is hard

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to picture such a West as that, but try to do it. Hold the picture—this picture of a horseless, pedestrian West—in your mind for a moment.

Then drop the curtain.

Lift it and look again. Look at the West as it was when the early American frontiersmen saw it.

A miracle has happened! The Plains are alive with droves of wild horses, in places almost rivaling the buffalo in numbers. A million manes are tossing on desert and prairie. The Indian nations of the Plains, who just now were earth-bound footmen, are nations of mounted warriors, perhaps the finest cavalry in the world.

The horse has come. Almost overnight, it seems, he has captured the West; and by his coming the West has been awakened, transformed.

How did this miracle happen? It was one of the most dramatic and one of the most momentous transformations that ever took place in any land under the sun. Its consequences were colossal. The bare facts of it—the bare facts of the coming of the horse and the transformation thus wrought—constitute, in all likelihood, the greatest animal epic ever enacted in the world, and one of the great human epics, for out of it came the whole thrilling and splendid drama of the West, which is so mighty a part of America's history

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and of her literature and of the very consciousness of her people.

You must go back again to that older West which we have pictured, that plodding, pedestrian, horseless West which had existed for untold thousands of years. What is true of the West is true of all America; from the Atlantic to the Pacific the incalculable hordes of game and the red men who hunt the buffalo and the antelope on foot have never seen a horse.

You must stand in imagination somewhere in the southwestern borderlands below the Rio Grande. To the southward there is a slight undulation of the ground, a low sandy ridge shutting off the view in that direction; but, north, east and west, as far as the eye can see, the level plain is mottled with bands of grazing antelope and buffalo.

Suddenly, over the low rise to the southward an animal appears. It is a beautiful thing, much smaller than a buffalo, much larger than an antelope. Its lithe, powerfully muscled body is built for both speed and strength; as it stands on the sky-line, shapely head held high, small pointed ears pricked forward, its neck is arched proudly and its long mane and tail wave in the breeze.

The nearest buffalo bull pauses in his cropping of

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the short grass. He lifts his shaggy head a little and stares at the newcomer. Their eyes meet—the dull, arrogant eyes of the huge bull, the large, lively, intelligent eyes of the long-maned stranger.

So, for a moment, they look at each other and, though neither knows it, that moment is big with fate. It is the first meeting of the buffalo and the horse, and it marks the end of one era in the story of America and the beginning of another.

We do not know precisely where or when that first meeting took place, but somewhere it happened and we can make a plausible guess at the approximate locality and date. In the year 1519, the Spanish conqueror, Hernando Cortez, landed in Mexico, bringing with him the first horses that ever set foot on the continent of North America in historic times.*

We know exactly what those horses were. We know in the first place—and this is important—that they were Spanish horses rich in the fine Arab and Barb blood which the early Phoenicians, and especially the Moors, had introduced into Spain centuries before. We know that there were eleven stallions and five mares, and we even know their colors and their char-

* Note—In earlier geological periods many forms of prehistoric horses or horse-like animals had existed in North America, but all these had been extinct for thousands of years, having disappeared probably before the first appearance of man upon the continent.

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acteristics, for Bernal Diaz, the historian of Cortez's march, wrote out a careful description of them, and his precious manuscript has been preserved.

Thus Diaz tells us that Cortez's horse was "a light chestnut stallion"; that Francisco de Morla's was "a dark chestnut stallion, a great racer and restless"; that Juan Velasquez de Leon rode "a silver-grey mare, very powerful, called Short-tailed, very restless and a good racer"; that Moron of Vaimo rode a "cream colored stallion, with marked feet and very restless"; that Pedro Gonzales de Trajillo had "a good chestnut stallion, a perfect chestnut, that ran very well"; and so on through the whole list of sixteen.

Whether or not the first American wild stallion, the first horse to run free on the Western Plains, was one of those first sixteen can never be known. Some of them, including Cortez's light chestnut, soon died or were killed in battle; but Alvarado, arriving to reinforce Cortez at Vera Cruz, brought with him twenty additional horses and a little later Narvaez came with nine hundred and eighty more. Some of these Spanish chargers were undoubtedly lost during the conquest of the country and it may well have been one of those strays that became the first wild horse in North America (excluding, of course, the vanished prehistoric

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forms), the first of a new race that was to transform a continent.

Was a mate with him just over the low ridge where we have pictured him when, wandering northward, he encountered his first buffalo herd? Or was he, perhaps for months or years, a lone wanderer in the vast wilderness until chance or fate brought him a mare lost, as he had been lost, from the Spanish array? When Cortez had conquered Montezuma, other ships came from Spain bringing adventurous caballeros to the land of fabulous treasure. In 1540, Francisco Vasquez Coronado, seeking the Seven Turquoise Cities of Cibola, of which glittering tales were told, rode northward across the Rio Grande with some two hundred and sixty mounted men, exploring the unknown American West as far as Kansas; and almost at the same time, Hernando de Soto landed in Florida to begin his memorable march to the Mississippi and beyond.

From both these expeditions horses were lost and it is likely that all three of these possible sources (Cortez, Coronado and de Soto) contributed to the tremendous thing that was to happen—the awakening of the West, which was probably already under way when, according to one tradition, the Spanish government of Mexico, late in the sixteenth century, liberated a number of horses on the southwestern plains. We know at

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least, and know it surely, that the first American wild stallion was a horse of the fine desert blood, brought to America by the Spaniards; and when one thinks of the mighty drama he started, we know that this first wild stallion was the most momentous animal that America has ever seen.

That sounds like extravagance, hyperbole. But let your mind dwell on what happened. Stop and think of what came out of the loins of that first stallion, whoever and wherever he was. Out of him came the Great West that we have known, a thing so mighty that we cannot measure it, unless we can measure the full effect of the American West upon both the lives and the minds of mankind.

If the horse—a kind of horse able to survive—had not come to the West and established itself there in great numbers before the American frontiersman and settler came to it, the West could not have been what it was. Most of what it was economically, and nearly all of what it was and is in the consciousness of the American people and of the world—in literature and art, in other words—springs from and is based on the horse that came with the Spaniard and conquered an empire that the Spaniard never won. Without him the West that developed could not have been. Without him the vast cattle industry could not have flourished,

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the cowboy could not have come into being, that painted and feathered Indian cavalry of the Plains, the most picturesque pageantry in the whole epic of America, could never have existed.

It is a strange and striking thought that if the ancient Phoenicians had not colonized the Spanish coast long before the Christian era, and if the Arabian Moors had not invaded Spain in the eighth century, bringing with them thousands of fine Arab and Barb horses, the drama of the American West probably could not have been enacted. The horse that came to America with the Spaniard was the desert horse of the Phoenician and the Arab but little changed; and thrown on his own resources in the hot, dry, waterless wilderness of the American Southwest, this hard and sinewy creature, at once the most enduring, the most beautiful, and the most "prepotent" of all the horses of the world, throve amazingly where the big, bulky, cold-blooded northern breeds would have perished.

He and his mares learned (though this they scarcely needed to learn) to avoid the truculent buffalo bulls and the grim grizzly bears. They learned, and this was more difficult, to defend themselves and their foals against the leopard-like jaguar, the puma that was like the lion their ancestors had known, the packs of wolves

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that hung on the flanks of the buffalo herds. Some fell, no doubt, before these keen-fanged enemies, and when the Plains Indians had learned to raid the herds, many stallions and mares were captured by the red horse-hunters. But, in spite of these losses, the increase of the wild droves was astonishingly rapid.

How rapid it was is revealed by the chronicles of the early American explorers. Pike, who traveled through Texas in 1807, found wild horses—known by that time as mustangs—in such incredible multitudes “as to afford supplies for all the savages who border on the province, the Spaniards, and vast droves for the other provinces.” Long before then the transformation of the southwestern Indians from footmen into mobile horsemen was complete, and by Pike’s day even the tribes of the northern Plains had horses. Coincidental with the swift increase of the wild droves in the southwest, was their spread to the northward. They moved northward at about an equal rate on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, and one by one the red nations learned their use, and whole tribes leaped almost at a single bound from pedestrian to equestrian life.

Here and there, in the half legendary lore of the Plains nations, traditions survive about the coming of the great change. Sometimes it came as the result of

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a chance meeting on the prairie with a wild horse band. Thus the Sacred Legend of the Omaha relates:

“It happened that a man in his wanderings discovered two animals. At first he thought they were elk, but they did not look like elk. Then he thought they were deer, but they were larger than deer. He did not know what they were, although he saw many. When the man showed himself, the animals did not run away but circled around him. He was troubled and, fearing them, he tried to get away, but the animals kept about him; he edged off and finally reached the village. The people were curious; they saw that the animals were gentle. Some of the men tried to mount them, but fell off, for they did not know how to ride. . . . There were two, male and female; they multiplied; and, thus, horses came among the Omaha.”

Sometimes the great change came when a tribe to whom the horse was yet unknown fell in with some far-ranging hunting party of one of the more southerly nations.

The Ponca say that one day long ago they sighted a band of Comanches and saw with amazement that they were mounted on strange animals. The Comanches charged, wielding their stone battle-axes. The breasts and sides of their “*kawas*,” as the Ponca called the strange maned animals, were protected with overlap-

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ping plates of rawhide to ward off the Poncas' arrows; but the latter, though they were much afraid, fought desperately and at last, when neither side could win, the battle ceased. Peace talks were held, a truce was arranged, the Ponca bartered some of their bows, which were very fine, for horses and persuaded the Comanches to teach them how to ride. Then they made war on the Comanches again and drove them from the region. "That," the legend concludes, "is how the Ponca first had horses, and we have had them ever since."

How accurate as to details these native traditions are nobody knows, but probably they provide a true enough picture of how the awakening spread over the West as nation after nation, plodding footmen for hundreds of centuries, dropped the fetters that bound them to earth. The tribes of the southern Plains—Apaches, Comanches and others—were the first of the red horsemen; the northern Blackfeet, who obtained their first mounts about 1805 or perhaps a little earlier, were among the last. By the early 1700's, the Pawnees were fighting and hunting on horseback. Black Moccasin, generally accounted a good authority, gave 1780 (which seems very late) as the approximate year when the change came to the Cheyennes. The Flatheads say that their first horses came from the Shoshoni. The

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northern Assiniboins were supplied before Alexander Henry visited them in 1776, and it is probable that by that time the Dakotah Sioux had become a nation of mounted men.

How many wild horses were there when the wild race was at its height?

Obviously, a great number was necessary to bring about the complete transformation of the West. It was a process which could advance no more rapidly than the horse could increase; but the increase of the mustang on the Western Plains was probably no less rapid than that of the kindred South American wild race, which is said to have sprung from five Spanish stallions and seven mares liberated at Buenos Aires in 1537 and which in less than half a century had spread to the Straits of Magellan in the south and into Paraguay in the north, a distance of nearly two thousand miles. Edwin T. Denig, with an intimate knowledge of prairie conditions, figured about 1854 that, barring accidents, the increase from three million buffalo cows would be fifty-one million in only eight years. The horse bred more rapidly than the buffalo and the proportion of "accidents" was certainly much smaller, so that in the three and a half centuries between 1520 and 1870 there

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was time for the production of an enormous number of horses in the West.

What that number was nobody knows. General W. H. Carter, an excellent authority, said that, but for the coming of the white settler, the mustang "would eventually have vied in numbers with the buffalo." Pike saw vast droves, not only in Texas, but in all the northern Mexican provinces. Gregg, one of the best early observers, names the mustang first among the conspicuous wild animals of the Plains. Victor Shawe speaks of wild horses in such multitudes between the Columbia River and the high desert country that sometimes "a single band traveled from dawn until dusk in passing a given point."

Equally swift, in all likelihood, was the increase of the Indian herds. The spread of the horse from tribe to tribe, as the result of barter or raiding expeditions, may have outstripped in some regions the spread of the wild droves.

Pike mentions a raid which added two thousand horses at a stroke to the great number already owned by the Comanches. Catlin describes the enormous Comanche and Pawnee herds. The Sioux and the Cheyennes had so many horses that forty were traded for a medicine pipe, and a warrior, in love with a pretty

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girl, might send twenty fine ones to her teepee. According to George Bird Grinnell, Chief Many Horses, who was already a man when his tribe of Piegan obtained their first mounts from the Kutenais, owned so many horses before he died that he could not keep track of them all. Samuel Parker, in 1835, found the Nez Percés and the Flatheads so completely equestrian in habit that not only every man and woman but every child over three years of age had a horse for his or her own use. The Crows of North Dakota, according to Denig about 1854, had "from 40 to 80 and sometimes 100 horses to a lodge."

In the West today, perhaps ten thousand—some would say twenty thousand—wild horses survive, a mere remnant of the early droves. There is mustang blood in these "fuzz-tails," of course, but it is mingled with the other strains that went to make the range horse of later years. They live in bands of six to sixty, chiefly in Arizona, Utah, eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, western Colorado and western Montana, and they seldom remain long in the same place because man grudges them the grass that they eat. Many have been killed or captured and their numbers grow steadily less. Such as they are, they bring to mind the adventurous days of the West, and it is sad to think that before very long they will all be gone.

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The real mustang—the wild horse of the fine Spanish-Arab-Barb blood, between whom and the “cow pony” the old Westerners made a sharp and proper distinction—has gone forever from the Plains. He vanished with the wild Plains Indian, whose life he transformed and whose comrade he became. He vanished for the same reason: the white man wanted his country and so he had to go. But his story, the epic story of the horse in America, remains.

The Cheyenne, looking up at the starry heavens over the prairie, recall a curious legend of their people. The Milky Way, this legend says, is the dusty track along which the Buffalo and the Horse once ran a race across the sky. They did run such a race—fifty million buffalo against that lone first stallion; and the stallion won. It was written that the buffalo, all the uncounted legions of them, should perish. But the seed of the stallion multiplied and gave us the splendid West of the wild red horsemen, the beleaguered wagon-trains, the vast cattle-ranges and the cowboy; that magnificent galloping West which has been one of the most stirring and momentous things in American life.

Later, of course, the colossus called Civilization was to wipe it out. But for a period it lasted; and that period, while the painted cavalry of the Plains, under

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such leaders as Red Cloud, Roman Nose, Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, maintained the losing fight to keep the Indian's continent for the Indian, is perhaps the most picturesque part of the drama.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Saga of the Sioux



THE Sioux were coming down through the forests of the North, the great forests about the Lake of the Woods and the headwaters of the Mississippi. They were fleeing southward and westward, a defeated, driven people—fleeing before the Chippewa who had obtained fire-arms from the French.

Against these foes the Sioux warriors could not stand. Village after village was abandoned. Sadly, wearily, the people took their burdens on their backs and trudged off in single file along the narrow woods-trails. When it seemed that they had fled far enough, new villages were established, and there they stayed for a while. But again the Chippewa came with their guns and again the fighting went against the Sioux. Then once more the villages were deserted, and once more the Sioux nation moved southward and westward—a

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nation strong in numbers but broken in spirit, unable to keep its place in the sun.

For years this continued. Then at last the Sioux came out upon the buffalo plains. They had been driven clear out of the northern forests, and they saw before them a new country, the wide prairies of what would later be Dakota. It was a vast land and alive with game, but they did not like it, for they had always been a forest people. Here were no forests and, because there was little cover, it was not a good land for hunters hunting on foot.

But they had no choice. They were a beaten, driven nation. So they prayed to Wakanda, Ruler of the Earth, to help them; and, fearful that even here the Chippewa would find them, they lived their new life as best they could. It was a hard life. The Plains were black with the myriads of the buffalo, but it was difficult in that open country to kill big, powerful beasts that could outrun them easily; and, because the distances were so great, they moved about little. A plodding, unwarlike, unambitious people, they existed rather than lived.

They were waiting for something, but they did not know it. There was no sign yet of the great thing that was to happen.

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Exactly when the great change came to the Sioux cannot be told with certainty. Probably some years before the time when the American colonists on the Atlantic coast were dumping King George's tea overboard and getting ready for Bunker Hill, a mustang stallion led his herd of mares up from the south and out upon the prairies of Dakota—the first of the wild horses to reach the northern Plains.

It was, if you look at it rightly across the panorama of the years, the end of a long, long journey. In the veins of that stallion and his mares flowed the fine Arab-Barb blood which the sheiks of North Africa had developed long before the birth of Christ and which the Spaniards had brought to Mexico; and now that blood, the noblest equine blood in the world, had found the goal toward which, perhaps, Fate had all along been leading it. From the Rio Grande to the Platte, from the Missouri to the Sierra Nevada, it had called sleeping nations to life. Now, on the prairies of Dakota, it was to work the most dramatic transformation of all.

For the awakening of the Sioux was the climax of that great awakening which the coming of the horse brought about. What Sioux warrior first saw a horse, what Sioux warrior first mounted and rode one, is not known. It is known that when the Sioux first beheld the new strange animals, they called them "divine

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dogs" or "divining dogs," and believed that they had been sent by the all-powerful deity, Wakanda.

How long an interval elapsed before amazement was followed by action can only be guessed. Perhaps some raiding party of Comanches or Pawnees came from the southward mounted upon the "divine dogs"; perhaps some quick-minded warrior among the Sioux conceived independently the idea of capturing the new animals and training them to carry men upon their backs. At any rate, a day came when the thing was done; and for the Sioux nation that was the most momentous day since the world began.

Something sprang to life in them then that must have been latent in them all the while—some mysterious energy which had been dammed and pent. They had been for generations a beaten, driven nation, hunted and harried from one home to another. Now—almost instantaneously, it seems, though certainly the change took time—the Sioux nation was utterly transformed.

With the feel of the horse between his lean thighs, a flame was lit in the Sioux warrior, a flame that was to sweep the Plains like a prairie fire. As more and more of the "divine dogs" came from the southward, and as those which had been captured bred and multiplied, the whole nation leaped to the saddle. With thousands of mounts—not the degenerate "fuzz-tails"

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of later years, but true mustangs of the original Arab-Barb-Spanish blood, swift, intelligent, hardy, often strikingly handsome—the Sioux in their heyday were probably the finest cavalry on earth.

Nothing could stand against them. Sweeping westward and southward, they drove even the warlike Cheyennes and Kiowas before them, forcing them into the mountains or far down upon the southern prairies. Strong in numbers and physically and mentally among the ablest of the red peoples, the Sioux became the most powerful nation of the West, masters of the greatest buffalo herds on the continent, lords of all the vast region between Minnesota and the Rockies and between the Yellowstone and the Platte.

Later, when the white frontier reached the Plains, Sioux was the most famous and the most dreaded name from Texas to the borders of Canada. To them and to the “divine dogs” that had transformed them—the horse of Allah that became the horse of Wakanda—is due most of the mane-tossing, hoof-hammering drama of the Wild West of American song and story: the white-topped wagon-trains encircled by yelling horsemen riding invisible behind their onrushing ponies, the hair-breadth escapes, the wars of the mustang-mounted Indians and the blue-coated troopers, the greatest victory won by the red man in defense of his

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native land when Red Cloud led the painted and feathered cavalry of the Plains in the only war that the United States has ever lost.

Red Cloud comes as the climax of it all. As the Sioux represent the culmination of that great awakening which is the most dramatic thing in the story of the West, so Red Cloud represents the culmination of the Sioux.

The blue-coated troopers at Fort Laramie didn't know much about him at first. It was said that he had risen to a chiefship because of his ability and courage. It was said, too, that, instead of having several wives like most of the Western Indians, he had loved the same woman all his life—which was something to his credit, if true. But these things had nothing to do with the important business in hand.

That business was gold. Gold in fabulous quantities had been discovered in Montana, and the rush to the new El Dorado had begun. They were there—the soldiers at Fort Laramie—to open an emigrant road through the Powder River country to the gold regions of Montana; and this Red Cloud, this Makhpia-luta as the Sioux called him, had declared that the road should not be made.

They held a council at Fort Laramie in the last days

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of June to try to win him over—the Commissioners sent from Washington and the army officers at the post. He came with his escort of sinewy Oglalla horsemen, the principal clan of the Teton Sioux, and listened gravely. Then he rose to speak.

His costume on this occasion is not of record: one thinks of him in the Sioux war-bonnet of eagle-feathers, the blood-red Nor'west blanket, which he wore with the dignity of a toga, deerskin leggins and moccasins elaborately beaded. He said that there was already a safe way for the white man to reach Montana —by going around the country of the Sioux through South Pass and thence northward along the Continental Divide. He said that if a great emigrant road protected by forts were opened through the Powder River region, the heart of the Sioux domain and their best hunting ground, it would save the horde of white gold-seekers five hundred miles, but it would violate the white man's word pledged in a solemn treaty, and it would be the ruin of the Sioux.

This was the truth and all knew it. Red Cloud did not know or, perhaps, was unwilling to believe that when gold is the lure, treaties become "scraps of paper." But he was soon to learn. Even as he was speaking a bugle sounded and he saw rank after rank of blue-coated troopers riding in through the gates of the fort.

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This, they told him sardonically, was the army of General Carrington sent by the "Great White Father" at Washington to reinforce the Laramie troops and open the Montana road.

It must have been a great moment. For the purposes of drama it was perfectly timed—the bugle blast interrupting Red Cloud's speech, the sudden clatter of hoofs and rattle of sabers in the parade-ground, the flags arrogant in the bright June sun.

Red Cloud, erect, poised, motionless as a bronze statue, was the focus of all eyes. He is said to have been "a magnificent specimen of physical manhood"; his face, "like the sculptured relief of some Assyrian king," was the strong eagle-face of the Teton Sioux in his prime; the white man who, perhaps, knew him best says that he was "as full of action as a tiger." To have seen him at that moment, when the bugle blast cut him short and he saw the soldiers riding in through the gates, would have been an experience never to be forgotten.

He turned slowly toward the Commissioners and the officers, where they sat watching him. What he said to them in that last defiance is not recorded and perhaps it is just as well. Outside, his warriors awaited him, reining in their lean, spirited horses, restive at sight of the flags and guns. He flung himself on his

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mount and rode away. Red Cloud's war against the United States had begun.*

That war deserves to be remembered. It was the year 1866. Chancellorsville, Antietam, Gettysburg, lay just behind; an army that had known such battles as those should make short work of Red Cloud's barbaric horsemen. "Give me eighty men," said Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Fetterman of Carrington's command, "and I'll ride through the whole Sioux nation." One of his captains, F. H. Brown, a fearless officer, announced his intention to take the scalp of Red Cloud himself.

So the army, whose business it was to fight and not to interpret treaties, marched into the Powder River country along the line of the new road. It rebuilt and garrisoned Fort Reno 167 miles in, pushed on and built Fort Phil Kearney at the mouth of the Little Piney, sent a detachment ninety-two miles ahead to build Fort C. F. Smith. Red Cloud played his game well. He let the troops come far in. Then he began to fight.

Around Fort Phil Kearney, the principal post, he flung two thousand horsemen, the best warriors of the

* According to another account, the council was being held on a platform in the parade-ground, when General Carrington and his escort arrived a little ahead of his main force.

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Sioux and some Cheyennes who had joined his force. He did not attack the fort itself, but the prairie swarmed with his warriors, the surrounding hills were red with them in their war-paint and their crimson Nor'west blankets. Carrington, working hard to complete the fort and compelled, in spite of his cannon, to stand on the defensive, was harassed almost to distraction.

Squadrons of painted warriors, splendidly mounted, wheeled and maneuvered on the plain, flourishing their lances, daring the soldiers to come out. Detachments sent to the wooded hills nearby to get logs for the post buildings were ambushed repeatedly and rescued with difficulty. Within twelve days five wagon-trains, attempting to reach the fort along the route of the new road, were attacked and turned back with a loss of fifteen men.

Then, one December noon, came disaster. A wood-cutting detachment was surrounded a short distance from the fort but beyond howitzer range, and Colonel Fetterman and Captain Brown dashed out to the rescue with eighty-two men, almost the exact number with which Fetterman had said that he could ride through the whole Sioux nation.

Not one of the eighty-four ever returned. Lured skillfully into an ambush beyond Lodge Trail Ridge,

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out of sight but within hearing of the fort, they were wiped out in charge after charge of the red horsemen who won that day one of the most decisive victories ever won in the West. Whether Red Cloud commanded personally in this fight (it seems likely that he was on his way to Fort Buford) is not greatly important; it was part of his war, whether or not he was actually on the field.

Five days later, Fort Buford at the mouth of the Yellowstone was attacked and, still later, Fort C. F. Smith. Carrington was superseded by Wessels, who undertook an ambitious offensive, which failed utterly. For months the troops along the line of the new road had actually to fight for their wood and water; and at least once another disaster was narrowly averted when Red Cloud cut off a second detachment from Fort Phil Kearney under Major Powell.

Powell had prepared a strong, oval corral of stout wagon-beds; within this defense, his men, equipped with rapid-fire, breech-loading rifles and seven thousand rounds of ammunition, fought exceedingly well. Again and again the red horsemen, most of them armed only with bows and lances and led, it is said, by Red Cloud in person and Crazy Horse, charged the wagon-box fort in the face of a murderous fire. For three hours they launched charge after charge—at least five charges.

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Then, when their scouts reported a relief column coming from Fort Phil Kearney, they drew off to mourn their dead.

This was defeat, but it did not end the war. "Good shots, good riders, and the best fighters the sun ever shone on"—so General Benteen described the Indians, while Colonel Dodge called them "the finest natural soldiers in the world." Red Cloud, declaring that he was fighting only to save his country for his people, fought on. Then, in 1868, when the war had lasted nearly two years, came the stern chief's triumph.

From the beginning his position had not varied one iota. Evacuation of the forts, abandonment of the Montana road, retreat of the white man's forces from the Sioux country—these were his terms. In the spring of '68 the United States signed a treaty of peace accepting these terms in toto. Red Cloud, as his exultant warriors burned the abandoned forts, could claim a unique distinction, a distinction which still stands. He is the only man in history who ever won a war against the United States.

His victory, of course, did not endure. That treaty, too, became a scrap of paper when, eight years later, gold was discovered in the Sioux country itself. In the fatal war that followed, Red Cloud, who saw the

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hopelessness of it and counseled peace, took no part. Sitting Bull was the brain and Crazy Horse and Gall the strong arms in the bitter struggle which began with spectacular Sioux victories over Crook on the Rosebud and Custer on the Little Bighorn and ended, after an interval of peace, in awful butchery at Wounded Knee. There Hotchkiss guns hurled explosive shells at the rate of nearly fifty per minute into the Indian camp, so that within a few minutes two hundred Indians, men, women and children, were lying dead or helpless. The survivors fled in wild panic; and "the pursuit was simply a massacre where fleeing women with infants in their arms were shot down after resistance had ceased and when almost every warrior was stretched, dead or dying, on the ground."

Much has been written about the final struggle of the Sioux and in particular about the Little Bighorn battle, in which Custer and his cavalry died fighting to the last like the brave men they were—so much that it need not be repeated here. The Bighorn fight is often called the "Custer massacre" but that is a misleading phrase; it was not a slaughter of helpless persons but a fair fight in which the troops were the aggressors and in which they were killed with their weapons in their hands, suffering the fate which the Indians would have

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suffered if they had lost, the fate which too often was meted out to the vanquished, both red and white.

Concerning the savage spirit of the Plains Indians a vast deal has been set down with honest intent in many books. Yet so excellent an authority as George Bird Grinnell declares outright that "there was practically no torture of captives by the Western Indians," and Stanley Vestal adds that stories of Indian atrocities were "hugely exaggerated on the frontier." Of the spirit of the Indian's white antagonist not so much has been said. It seems only fair to place on record here the recommendation of Lieutenant-General W. T. Sherman, commanding the United States forces in the West, contained in a dispatch to General Grant in December, 1866:

"We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, *even to their extermination, men, women and children*. Nothing else will reach the root of the case."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Epic of Sauts the Bat



SAUTS the Bat rose. He was so tall that Ellsinger thought he would never stop rising. Yet when he was on his feet, standing there at the lower end of the big army tent, he didn't look very tall. That was because he was so magnificently made. "By gravy," said little Ellsinger to himself, "he's the jim-dandiest lookin' chief I ever seen anywhere—this here Sauts the Bat or whatever you want to call him."

You'd never have guessed it but there was something in Ellsinger, some sense of the fitness of things, that made him glad Sauts the Bat had another name. That was an awful name for such a jim-dandy lookin' chief. It was his real name, the name the Cheyennes called him by; but the Kansas settlers called him Roman Nose, and this name, Ellsinger thought, was a lot better.

He had a Roman nose, all right—a nose like an

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eagle's beak. He stood six feet four, Ellsinger figured; he looked to be thirty years old; there wasn't a pound of soft flesh on him. Somewhere back in the old country Ellsinger had seen a marble statue of a perfect man and had never forgotten it, perhaps because he himself was so little and crooked. Roman Nose was that perfect man, only he wasn't white marble but bronze.

Ellsinger couldn't tear his eyes away from this living bronze statue. Through the small slit that he had found in the canvas wall, he could see the whole interior of the long hospital tent in which the Council was being held: General Palmer and the other officers of the post seated in full uniform at one end of the tent, the Cheyenne chiefs and their wild retainers at the other end. But from the moment when Sauts the Bat or Roman Nose rose from his place among the Cheyennes, Ellsinger never saw any of the others. The utter physical splendor, the superb animal beauty of the young war-chief filled him with a kind of intoxication.

He was a queer creature, this little hump-shouldered Sigmund Ellsinger who, a dozen years earlier, had come straight from the immigrant dock in New York to the Kansas prairies, who had been five years a plainsman, six years an Indian, and now was a white man again. There was something in him you'd never have

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suspected. Perhaps, in different circumstances, he might have been an artist, a great sculptor of the human body.

He crouched, his eyes close to the slit in the tent-wall, staring at Roman Nose standing there at the lower end of the tent in front of the other chiefs. Two of the latter he recognized, but in his years with the Cheyennes he hadn't happened to meet the young warrior who was known as Sauts the Bat and who had since become the most influential leader of the tribe. Ellsinger had never seen a man at once so powerful and—he had no other word for it—so beautiful. He watched, completely fascinated, as the tall Indian began to move forward toward the middle of the tent.

Roman Nose moved slowly, yet Ellsinger had an impression of cat-like quickness as well as enormous strength. He'd seen plenty of strong men. They were like bulls or oxen; this man was like a Bengal tiger which Ellsinger had once seen in a zoo in Prague. He moved exactly like that tiger—the same smooth flowing motion, graceful as the flow of a dancing woman's lithe limbs but with a terrible power in it that scared you even through the bars of the cage.

It scared Ellsinger now. He had a panicky feeling that this beautiful, terrible tiger of a man, advancing silently toward the table behind which the officers were seated, was going to leap upon General Palmer and

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tear out his throat. He saw that General Palmer's hands were clasped upon the table in front of him but that the hands of the officers on either side were hidden below the table; and he knew that those officers had their hands on their revolvers.

If Roman Nose didn't halt . . . if his hand moved toward the knife or tomahawk in his belt . . .

Midway of the long tent Roman Nose stopped. He flung back his white buffalo robe, beautifully tanned and soft as cashmere, exposing his powerful shoulders and broad arched chest. As he folded his arms, Ellsinger saw the long muscles, like twisted wire, writhe and slide under the smooth bronze skin. His head, with a single eagle feather in the scalp-lock, was held high and thrown well back; a grand, strongly aquiline head, with deep-cut, rough-hewn features, dilated nostrils like those of a thoroughbred horse, a large mouth with thin lips through which gleamed strong white teeth.

He stood there in absolute silence for almost half a minute, his fierce black eyes roving from one to another of the officers seated at the table. Perhaps he knew the electric power of his presence and staged this dramatic pause deliberately; to Ellsinger the magnificent arrogance of his bearing seemed the perfect and wholly natural complement of his flawless and terrific beauty. The queer thought came to the little man that here was

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something to be worshiped; a work of God's hands—the same God who had made that Bengal tiger—so wonderful that to injure it would be blasphemy.

Suddenly Roman Nose began to speak.

"I am Sauts the Bat," he said in the Cheyenne tongue. "I am the war-chief of the Cheyennes. I have come here to the white man's fort to speak for my people. It is the first time that I have taken the white man's hand in friendship. It is for the white chief to say whether it shall be the last.

"I do not need many words. This land is my people's land, the land of the Cheyennes. It has always been our land, not the white man's. We wish to live on it as we have always lived. When the white men first came to our land, we treated them kindly, but they have not repaid our kindness. At Sand Creek they killed and scalped more Cheyenne women and children in one day than all the white women ever killed by the Cheyennes.¹² They have killed our people and driven away our game until we do not know whether we can live in our own land much longer.

"We have thought much about this unjust thing. It is the white man's railroad that is driving away our game. It is cutting the Cheyennes' land in two. If it goes on, soon there will be no buffalo left and the Cheyennes must starve. So we have decided that the

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railroad must stop. It must not be built on past the place where it now ends. I ask the white chief to ask the Father in Washington to stop the railroad now. If the Father will not do this, the Cheyennes have decided that there will be war. It will be better to be killed fighting for our land than to see our women and children starve.

“I have no more words. Sauts the Bat has spoken for his people.”

Little Ellsinger turned suddenly away from the slit in the tent-wall. His face was convulsed, tears stood in his eyes, his hand clutched at his throat as though he were choking.

“The fool!” he whispered hoarsely. “The damned loony fool! Why, there ain’t a chance o’ stoppin’ the railroad, the Kansas-Pacific railroad! Why, they’re goin’ to build right through to Denver an’ then California!”

He shambled on, a crooked nondescript figure, his lips moving as though trying to put into words what was in his mind. He couldn’t. It wasn’t in him to express the thing his mind pictured—that magnificent body, that beautiful splendid animal, that superb bronze human sculpture broken and mutilated, shot to pieces with rifles, changed into crawling, stinking carrion. . . .

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The railroad crept on, inevitable as civilization itself. The Cheyennes swept across western Kansas like a prairie fire. Sigmund Ellsinger was afraid—not of anything tangible but of something in his mind. In his mind he found himself riding with Roman Nose, fighting to keep the white men from destroying that marvelous bronze body, fighting to stop the railroad that would spoil the land of the Cheyennes forever.

The thing worried him; he knew that he couldn't afford to feel like that. He'd "gone white" and, by gravy, he'd stay white! He'd been Injun for six years, but now he was a white man again. Some people said that was impossible, that once you'd gone Injun you stayed Injun inside. But that wasn't true. He'd prove it; by gravy, he'd prove it!

One September day word came of an attack on a train eighty miles beyond Fort Wallace. Within two hours Colonel George Forsyth's special detachment of fifty mounted scouts—not soldiers but veteran plainsmen—were in the saddle and Ellsinger rode with them. They were glad to have him; small and bent though he was, he was a dead shot, a good plainsman, hard as a nail. They picked up the Indians' tracks and, on the eighth day from Fort Wallace, when the trail of the war-party they were following resembled a well-trav-

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eled wagon-road, they made camp in a bowl-shaped valley beside the dry bed of the Arikaree River.

Ellsinger knew the Cheyennes. That night he saw on the surrounding hills torch-lights which were swung like signals and he knew that in the morning, as soon as it was light enough to see, the thing would happen. All that last day he had known that they were riding into a trap, but Forsyth wouldn't believe him.

Maybe, Ellsinger figured, Colonel Forsyth didn't believe he had really gone white. Some of the men didn't believe it. He knew that they talked about him; he'd heard one of them say that a man who had lived six years with the Injuns was sure to have got Injun in his blood. Prob'lly that was why Forsyth wouldn't listen to him when he begged the Colonel to turn back. Prob'lly Forsyth thought he was trying to flim-flam so his friends, the Cheyennes, could get away.

Well, he'd show Forsyth. In the morning, he'd show him. There'd be a fight before they were wiped out. If he could draw a bead on Roman Nose himself . . .

Ellsinger didn't sleep well. He moaned and tossed in his blanket. All night he dreamed that he was riding with the Cheyennes, fighting back the white men to keep them from killing Roman Nose, to keep them from turning that magnificent bronze body into carion. In the gray of dawn he woke sweating and trem-

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bling, and three minutes later he was standing beside his saddled horse, close to Colonel Forsyth and Sharp Grover, the head-scout.

Except a few who were handing out coffee under Lieutenant Beecher's direction, the whole detachment was in line, each man standing at his horse's head, bridle-rein through his left arm, rifle in his right hand—ready.

So Forsyth expected it too, thought it was coming. Ellsinger didn't think; he *knew*. He knew it was coming within five minutes. But that didn't matter. There was something else more important. He was studying Colonel Forsyth's face, trying to decide whether he was the kind of man who wouldn't believe that he, Ellsinger, had really become a white man again.

He heard Sharp Grover rip out an oath. Even before he pulled his eyes away from Forsyth's face, Ellsinger knew what he was going to see. Yet what he saw surprised him. He had known, known almost to the minute, that the attack was coming and that there would be plenty of Cheyennes. But he hadn't realized how many there would be.

They were racing down from the low hills that enclosed the valley like the rim of a bowl. There were hundreds of them—maybe a thousand, Ellsinger figured—and they had the detachment surrounded; wher-

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ever he looked he saw them, topping the sky-line of the hills, galloping their mustangs down the long bare slopes. Something rose in his throat like a lump that he couldn't swallow. It wasn't fear but the opposite. A hundred times he'd seen them swoop down like this surrounding a buffalo herd. By gravy, it was fine to see it again—the beautiful swift horses skimming along like swallows, the slim, naked riders waving their lances and rifles, the long eagle-feather war-bonnets streaming in the wind.

He woke from this with a horror flooding through him. Was he white or Cheyenne? By gravy, for a minute he'd been Cheyenne again! If Forsyth had been looking at him, he'd have seen it in his face. But it wasn't true. He was white, white all through. Maybe Forsyth *had* been looking at him! He'd have to prove it to Forsyth now. If he could kill Roman Nose, that would prove it. . . .

Colonel Forsyth's voice broke in upon his consciousness. Forsyth was pointing with his big army revolver over the wide dry bed of the Arikaree.

"Boys," he said, his tone vibrant with controlled excitement, yet quiet and cool, "we'll get over to that island and stand 'em off there."

Ellsinger looked where the pistol pointed. In the middle of the hard sandy river-bed, which was about

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four hundred feet wide, was a small gravelly island dotted with stunted willows and alders. In the wet season, when the river was full from bank to bank, this island was probably overflowed, but now a mere trickle of water surrounded it. It stood in the midst of the flat dry expanse of the river-bed like a little fort.

Ellsinger nodded in approval. Yes, they could make a fight there—a good fight. Maybe he'd get his chance to prove what he had to prove.

They splashed through the shallow strip of water surrounding the island and tied the horses to the willows just as the first bullets zinged over them. Standing behind the horses, they replied to the Indians' fire. The Cheyennes didn't charge at once. Taking cover in a fringe of wild plums along the river banks, they poured a hail of bullets and arrows upon the island.

The horses, exposed and helpless, went down one by one. Crouching behind the carcasses, the men dug with their bowie knives pits in the soft gravel and sand. Before these pits were completed, two scouts were killed and five others wounded, Surgeon Mooers was mortally hit in the head, Colonel Forsyth was crippled by a ball through the thigh and another in the lower leg. When the pits had been dug, with the damp gravel thrown up

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in front, things were much better. They were fairly well sheltered then, pretty strongly entrenched.

To Ellsinger all this first part of the fight was like a tedious pantomime. It wasn't what he was waiting for. The idea that had taken root in his mind had become an obsession; he must find Roman Nose, prove what he had to prove. Purposely he had stuck close to Forsyth. The pit he had dug for himself was next to the one in which Forsyth lay propped on his elbows. When he killed Roman Nose, Forsyth would see him do it. Ellsinger, knowing the Cheyennes, believed that his chance would come soon.

He was right. It came with a splendor that Ellsinger hadn't dreamed of, with a fearful barbaric beauty worthy of the man whose splendid and terrible bronze symmetry possessed little hump-shouldered Sigmund Ellsinger like a spell.

South of the island the dry bed of the Arikaree curved to the right. Around this curve came some four hundred Cheyenne horsemen, trotting slowly in eight ranks of about fifty front. At their head on a superb chestnut mustang rode Roman Nose—Sauts the Bat.

For a moment the plainsmen in the rifle pits seemed awed into silence by the spectacle. Then a man at Ellsinger's left drawled in the accent of Texas:

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“Boys, this’ll be a real party now. They’re goin’ to rush us. They’re goin’ to charge the island.”

Ellsinger peered with rapidly blinking eyes over the gravel mound in front of his pit. He knew the Cheyennes and he had thought they would try this thing, yet now he could scarcely believe it. The pity of it seemed too great. These people fighting for their land, fighting to keep their home . . . they were going to charge the rifle pits . . . they were going to ride straight into the bullets.

He wasn’t afraid for himself. Why should he be afraid? These were his people. His head jerked upward. No, by gravy, they weren’t his people! He wasn’t Injun, he was white! This was his chance to prove it. By killing Roman Nose as he led the charge of the Cheyennes. By blasting a hole in that great arched chest. By smashing that glorious bronze body . . .

The film cleared from Ellsinger’s eyes. He stole a quick glance at Forsyth, propped in the next pit, his big Colt in his hand. He heard Forsyth’s voice, steady and strong in spite of his pain, telling the men to see that the magazines of their rifles were full—they were Spencer repeaters, good for seven shots without reloading—and to hold their fire until he gave the word.

Sharp Grover was as cool as Forsyth and there was a quiver of exultation in his voice. “Boys,” he said,

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“we can ruin ‘em if they try it. We can pump seven volleys into ‘em with these here Spencers. We can blast ‘em to Kingdom Come.”

Ellsinger wanted to jump up and wave them back. He didn’t do it. There was something else that he wanted even more—to prove what he had to prove. He made up his mind to wait till Roman Nose was right on him. He’d kill him when he was right in front so Forsyth would be sure to see it.

He was perfectly steady. By gravy, this was a sight! The Cheyenne horsemen were trotting in open order down the dry level river-bed straight toward the island. They were splendidly mounted; Ellsinger saw that their horses were the pick of the great Cheyenne droves—the pampered, spirited war-steeds. Some of the warriors had rifles, but most of them carried round painted shields and long lances with red pennons fastened near the tips. All were stripped and painted and all had eagle feathers in their hair, while many wore long war-bonnets reaching from their heads to their horses’ backs.

Ellsinger was aware of them as one is aware of the back-drop in a play. What he really saw was Roman Nose, riding in front on his big chestnut stallion. On his head were two buffalo horns; his war-bonnet of eagle feathers streamed behind him in the wind; around his waist he had bound a brilliant scarlet sash. Except for

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this he was entirely naked. In the strong sunlight his perfectly proportioned body gleamed a rich golden-bronze.

Again there surged up in Ellsinger an emotion that was like worship. As great music and great poetry exalt souls attuned to them, so the magnificent body of this bronze Achilles exalted little crooked Sigmund Ellsinger in whose small ugly body dwelt a soul attuned to the beauty and rhythm of form. Yet even now he didn't forget the thing he was going to do.

The Cheyenne horsemen, still in seven or eight ranks of about fifty front, were still coming at a trot, with Roman Nose ahead and in the center. Suddenly the Indian sharp-shooters hidden along the river-banks quickened their fire; and almost at the same moment Roman Nose flung his right hand above his head, brandishing his heavy rifle as though it were a switch. The chestnut stallion leaped forward and behind their leader the whole Cheyenne array broke into a gallop.

It was one of the grandest cavalry charges ever made in the West. The cool, steady men in the rifle-pits, veteran plainsmen and good shots, heavily outnumbered but well entrenched and with deadly repeating rifles in their hands, quietly awaited Forsyth's word. As the charging horsemen neared the island, chanting their wild war-songs and their prayers for those doomed to

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go to the Spirit-Land, the Cheyenne sharp-shooters on the river banks necessarily ceased firing.

The plainsmen rose to their knees in the pits, resting their rifles on the gravel-mounds in front. Suddenly Forsyth shouted: "Now!"

A sheet of flame burst from the rifle pits. It was followed almost at once by another. Gaps were blasted in the oncoming wave of horsemen, but the gaps closed at once; the wave surged on. A third time the rifle pits spat their flames. Again the great gaps blown in the shattered ranks were closed; still the wild war-songs pealed out above the drumming of hoofs and the galloping horsemen raced onward.

One man in the rifle pits hadn't fired—Ellsinger. He was sick with the pity of it. His people, his Cheyennes . . . human like white men . . . fighting for their homes . . . riding naked into the bullets. He hadn't fired into them. But from the beginning his rifle had covered Roman Nose. It had never left him except when the smoke hid him. It was covering him now.

Roman Nose hadn't been touched. He was still in front, still leading the charge, his head, with its buffalo horns, half turned as he urged his followers forward. The chestnut stallion had been hit; it seemed to Ellsinger that Roman Nose was giving his own strength

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to the horse, lifting it onward at each stride with his great bronze thighs.

They were close at hand now. They had ridden through hell as bravely as ever men rode and now they had nearly reached their goal. But the men in the rifle pits were brave men too. Annihilation stared them in the face, but no panic wave swept them at this crucial moment. At pistol-shot range they pumped a fifth volley, then a sixth, into the mass of horsemen.

Only a few yards away Ellsinger saw a great bronze man burst through the smoke—a magnificent naked golden-bronze man, with a pair of buffalo horns on his head, riding a big bronze stallion whose nostrils spewed bloody froth. He was about to leap his horse upon the island. Another moment and he would be in the rifle pits.

Ellsinger turned cold. Nausea boiled up in his throat. He stared with wild eyes along the barrel of his rifle. A whimpering cry broke from him as he pulled the trigger. Roman Nose—Sauts the Bat—crumpled forward as though his whole chest had been caved in. Bronze man and bronze horse crashed down together.

Ellsinger jumped to his feet. In a bound he reached Forsyth's pit, next to his own.

“You saw it, Colonel,” he screamed. “I did it. . . . I killed him. . . . Me, Ellsinger.”

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Standing on the rim of the pit, he was above the thickest smoke. He saw that the last two volleys had broken the Cheyenne charge. Under cover of the smoke, the survivors were carrying off their dead, riding in couples, dragging the bodies between the horses. Ellsinger jumped down into his pit again and sat there trembling. By gravy, it was awful, awful! They'd been mowed down. . . . They'd only been fightin' for their lands. . . . He was the jim-dandiest lookin' chief and now he was only dead meat. But Forsyth knew now; he'd had it proved to him, by gravy!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Fate Grins



THERE are various ways of expressing truth as one sees it. Roman Nose fell and the battle of the Arikaree was fought, as has been related. If there was never a man named Sigmund Ellsinger, there were men like him, who felt vaguely as he felt, in whom the same or similar emotions mingled and contended as they played their little parts in the struggle of the white man and the red. So much that was virile and handsome, as well as so much that was ugly, had to perish!

The end is near now. Sioux and Cheyenne and the other tribes of the Plains, puzzled, bewildered, almost despairing, are not yet utterly broken. But they cannot last long. The white Colossus, whose victory is part of man's upward struggle, presses them not only from the East. He has passed around the continent in his ships and is busy now in the country of Oregon on the coast of the Pacific. The tale follows him there,

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follows in Oregon a chain of tragic incident and consequent drama to the story's end.

Captain George W. Ayres of Boston, cruising for sea-otter furs in the Pacific in his ship, the *Mercury*, put into Nootka Sound one day and took twelve Indians on board as hunters. They went with him willingly, for he promised to bring them back when his cruise was over. Instead, he marooned them on a deserted island in Sir Francis Drake's Bay. It was easier to do that than sail all the way back to Nootka; and it didn't matter to Captain Ayres whether the twelve survived or starved.

That is the first link in the chain. The second is the *Tonquin*. She came to Nootka soon afterwards—John Jacob Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, sent by him from New York around Cape Horn to found a fur empire on the Oregon coast. She had stopped at the mouth of the Columbia and built a fort there (Astoria, they called it), garrisoned by a few forest-voyageurs under Duncan McDougall. Then she cruised northward along the Vancouver shore to trade for sea-otter with the Nootka tribesmen.

The *Tonquin* dropped anchor off the Indian town and—her captain, Jonathan Thorn, being a bull-headed, violent man, afraid of nothing—she didn't even rig

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safety-nettings around the deck to prevent too many Indians from coming aboard. Captain Thorn had never heard of Captain Ayres or what he had done to the twelve Nootka hunters. If Thorn had known about that, he would have enjoyed it. Some weeks before, he had beaten one of his seamen half insensible, thrown him overboard and sailed away, leaving the sailor to sink or swim ashore as fate decided.

So Captain Thorn would probably have laughed if he had known of that clever trick which Captain Ayres had played. Ayres had saved time and money. What did it matter if a dozen Indian women had been widowed? . . . When the *Tonquin* had anchored, the Indians came out in their great sea-canoes, bringing their bundles of furs, and Thorn let them come on board, as many as wanted to come. The goods were arranged on the deck and trading began.

But it didn't go well. Thorn and James Lewis, a clerk, did the bidding, but the Indians rejected most of the offers. A tall old Nootka chief, thin and hook-nosed and magnificently dressed in a beautiful sea-otter robe belted with native cloth of many colors, directed them with great dignity from a seat placed for him by his underlings. They watched him, and when he shook his head, they shook theirs also.

Captain Thorn's quick anger rose, quickly boiled over.

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He whirled on the chief and ordered him to leave the ship. The Indian made no move, and Thorn, in a fury, seized him by the hair, jerked him to his feet, then struck him in the face. There was a moment of utter silence, utter stillness. Only a moment. The chief turned away and went quietly down the ladder and his people followed him.

Captain Jonathan Thorn strutted the *Tonquin's* deck. He'd taught these damned red cattle a lesson. They'd be back in the morning and trading would be better then. Alex McKay, one of Astor's partners, who was on board, didn't think so and wanted to weigh anchor. But Captain Thorn was right.

Early in the morning they came with smiling, happy faces, with rolls of fine otter skins—as many rolls as five large canoes, each manned by twenty paddlers, could carry—and Thorn in high good humor bade them come aboard with their pelts and make themselves at home. So they swarmed up the ladders (all except the women, who stayed in the canoes) and trading *was* better and Captain Thorn's good humor expanded—until, suddenly, at a signal, they drew the terrible *pautumauagan* warclubs hidden in their rolls of otter skins and made the *Tonquin's* deck a bloody butcher-pen from stem to stern.

Below, in the canoes, the Nootka women waited;

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probably the twelve who had special cause to remember Captain Ayres' clever trick were there. Above, in the *Tonquin's* rigging, five seamen, sent aloft just before the blow fell, looked down upon the shambles. The deck was a swirling milling bedlam over which the warclubs tossed and waved.

They saw an Indian drive a knife into James Lewis, saw McKay felled with a warclub and pitched overboard. Captain Thorn, horrible with blood, was fighting his way toward the cabin where there were muskets, but he did not reach that haven; a warclub smashed in his head. Only one man escaped death—a Chehalis Indian taken on board at Gray Harbor as an interpreter. He rushed to the rail, shouted to a woman in one of the canoes that he surrendered himself her slave, jumped overboard and was pulled into the canoe by his new owner.

The five seamen aloft in the rigging had been thinking fast. There was one chance and one only. They came down the ratlines like monkeys and had nearly reached the deck before they were seen. One was killed; the others plunged into the steerage hatchway, passed below deck to the cabin and from that stronghold opened fire with muskets. In a few minutes the canoes were racing back toward the shore.

But four men couldn't hold the *Tonquin* long or

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take her out against a head-wind to the open sea. Early next morning the Indians, watching the ship, saw the four survivors lower a boat and pull away toward the ocean in a desperate attempt to reach Astoria three hundred miles down the coast. Canoes were sent in pursuit. Other canoes paddled out toward the *Tonquin*, circled round her, drawing closer and closer.

She lay there, strewn with bodies of the dead and like a dead thing herself; yet somehow they distrusted her, feared that there might be life in her still. They had avenged Ayres' cruelty and Thorn's insult to their chief; now the *Tonquin* with all her goods was theirs. Gradually they conquered their strange dread that was like a prophecy. Nearer and nearer came the circling canoes and no man or woman in them heard a small, faint sound deep in the bowels of the *Tonquin*—a tiny sound a little like the hissing of a snake.

Silent and empty and helpless she lay, and suddenly their foolish fear of her was gone and the big fifty-foot sea-canoes ran alongside and clustered round her, while men and women in scores and hundreds clambered over her bulwarks. Still that tiny sound in the very bowels of her was unheard; the almost inaudible hissing and spitting of a long slim thing like a snake with a fiery head creeping, creeping onward through the darkness under the deck. If the dead can hear, per-

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haps Captain Jonathan Thorn heard it; and, unless death had changed him, undoubtedly he laughed—laughed at a joke about to be played upon these damned red cattle which would far surpass the feeble joke of Captain Ayres.

The long creeping thing like a snake with a fiery head had almost completed its journey. Inching along through the darkness under that crowded deck, the bright head of it was now within a foot of the ship's magazine.

It didn't stop there. It was a slow train of gunpowder laid during the night by the four survivors of the *Tonquin*'s crew and lighted just before they left the ship. Steadily the spark moving along it traversed those last few inches; and suddenly, with a roar that shook the coast and the sea, a red volcano burst upward out of the *Tonquin*, shattering her deck into a thousand slivers, blowing her hull to pieces.

Five hundred men, women and probably children had been massed on the *Tonquin*'s deck and in the sea-canoes against her sides. In an instant the air was full of the fragments of them, the water strewn with their burned and broken bodies. Two hundred were killed; how many were maimed and blinded for life no one knows. For days the sea cast up the ghastly remnants of what had once been human beings. For many nights

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the death-fires blazed along the shore. For weeks the great cedar houses of the stricken Nootka folk were pitiful with wailing.¹³

It all links up—all the drama and pathos and triumph of this tale of the Four Horsemen which, you might say, is really the tale of Oregon itself. We haven't come to the Four Horsemen yet; but the clever Captain Ayres is part of their story, and from Captain Ayres and the trick he played on the twelve Indian hunters comes the thunderous tragedy of the *Tonquin*. The *Tonquin*, too, is a link in the continuing chain. Looking back at this dramatic sequence, one has an impression of a sardonic Fate seated, cloud-wrapped, on one of the Pacific peaks, pointing his finger now here, now there; and wherever the finger points a drama is enacted, a drama which is another link in the chain.

So now the finger points to Astoria, the little fort at the mouth of the Columbia River which the *Tonquin* had established before her fatal cruise northward to Nootka Sound. And the next link in the chain is a small glass bottle on a table in Duncan McDougall's office at Fort Astoria.

Astoria boasts today of being the oldest city west of the Rocky Mountains. Then it was only a few months old and death, sudden and violent, stared it in the face.

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Duncan McDougall, in command of the little log post, kept a stiff upper lip but was badly worried. More vehemently than ever he wished that he had made swifter progress with Comcomly's dreamy-eyed daughter.

Comcomly held Astoria in the hollow of his hand; and the hand was about to close. He was head chief of the Chinook tribe which controlled the lower Columbia region and he was so great a man that three hundred slaves are said to have preceded him to spread his path with otter-skin rugs when he walked abroad. Among his daughters was one who seemed to Duncan McDougall the most alluring woman he had ever seen. Most of his life McDougall had lived in the woods; to him, as to many voyageurs, a slim daughter of the forest need be no less enchanting than a pale charmer of the cities. He was mad about this tawny princess who dwelt in barbaric affluence in her father's great cedar lodge waited on by his slaves.

But McDougall hadn't won the girl yet; and now, he reflected grimly, he would never win her because it was unlikely that he would live another day.

For twenty-four hours McDougall had been aware of what was brewing. Comcomly had said nothing, but one of his underlings had betrayed what was in the old chief's mind. Comcomly, until now a friend of the

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white men who for thirty years had been coming in their ships to the Oregon coast to trade for furs, had had enough of white men at last. They had brought with them many evils—diseases never known among the Indians before and, worst of all, the smallpox which a few years previously had wrought such fearful havoc that the red men dreaded it more than god or devil.

And now, in the neighboring country of the Nootkas, had occurred this mystifying *Tonquin* disaster in which two hundred Indians who had dared to avenge their wrongs had been blown suddenly and incomprehensibly to fragments by the white man's evil magic.

Yes, it was time to kill the white monster that threatened to swallow them all—to kill it now when the killing would be easy. Comcomly rather regretted this necessity, for he was not a bloodthirsty man and he had conceived a strong liking for McDougall. But the mysterious *Tonquin* catastrophe, as sinister as the smallpox and more sudden, had decided him. He had eight hundred warriors ready. When he gave the word, the handful of white men in Fort Astoria wouldn't last half an hour.

Duncan McDougall, gazing gloomily from the window of the small room that he used as an office, knew that his life and the lives of his companions hung by a hair. They would fight, of course, but they were too

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few to hold the stockade; the first charge of the Chinooks would overwhelm them.

Haggard and drawn, yet a gay figure in his fantastic voyageur costume, McDougall turned slowly away from the window. On a homemade table against the wall stood a row of glass bottles of various shapes and sizes—the fort's supply of medicines. McDougall had seen them there a hundred times. Yet, as his eyes fell on them now, his head jerked suddenly upward and he stood staring at them, a rapt expression on his keen, swarthy face.

Crossing the room with quick steps, he picked up one of the smallest bottles, drew the cork, poured the colorless liquid on the floor and put the cork back in place. Then, with the empty bottle in his hand, he ran to the door.

“Stuart! . . . Franchère! . . .” he called excitedly.

When he told them his plan, they thought him crazy. It would be madness, they all said, to let the Indians into the stockade. McDougall admitted this cheerfully and pointed out what every man of them already knew—that if the attack came, they couldn't keep the Indians out. Would they try his plan, dangerous as it was, or wait idly and die like minks in a pen?

He had his way in the end. The stockade gate was opened and Stuart and another woodsman walked, un-

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armed, across the clearing and into the woods. Presently they returned. They had told Comcomly to come that afternoon with his warriors to hear a talk which the McDougall chief would make to them in the enclosure of the fort. Comcomly had accepted the invitation promptly. Evidently he believed that Ecannum, the god of the Chinooks, had stolen the white men's wits.

The afternoon came; and there was one moment that afternoon when McDougall's heart stood still.

He was sitting alone, cross-legged, on the ground in the center of the enclosure. Facing him sat Comcomly and around these two the whole space within the stockade was packed with Chinook warriors. There was no doubt as to their purpose. They had come with their faces painted, wearing their war-corslets of hard elk-hide and each man had his great *pautumaugan* warclub, half bludgeon, half saber. For ten minutes of solemn silence McDougall and Comcomly had smoked; and now McDougall knew, and the other white men watching from the log-house knew, that the smoking was nearly over and the moment which would bring them life or death was at hand.

Suddenly McDougall, his eyes fixed upon Comcomly's utterly expressionless face, saw a vein in the old chief's forehead begin to throb. In a flash he real-

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ized that Comcomly, without waiting for the speech-making, was about to give the signal for the massacre.

McDougall sprang to his feet. He flung his right hand above his head. In it he held the small glass bottle that he had taken from the table in his office.

“Look!” he cried. “Look at this thing in my hand—this bottle. It seems a little thing. But death is in it—death for you all. Even if you kill me, I can kill you with this bottle, as surely as the dead white men on the *Tonquin* killed two hundred of the Nootka tribe.”

He stopped to let that sink in. Eyes blazing, head thrown back above his square broad shoulders, the up-raised hand in which he held the corked glass bottle quivering with what seemed to be pent-up rage, he was a splendid, a magnificent figure.

“Listen!” he shouted. “You know the smallpox. You know how it has killed your people by the hundreds, how it has poisoned the very air they breathed, how they could not escape from it no matter where they hid. *I am the smallpox chief! I have it here shut up in this bottle.* All I need do is open the bottle, send the smallpox out among you, and you are dead. That I will do unless you swear that you will live at peace with me now and forever.”

A half-hour later Duncan McDougall, in the little

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room that he used as an office, filled a tall tumbler with rum and drained it. And still later, on a sunny July day of the year 1813, he married his tawny princess and became the happy son-in-law of Chief Comcomly.¹⁴

First Captain Ayres, then the *Tonquin*, then Duncan McDougall's smallpox bottle. Each is drama in itself and each is a link in the chain. Now at last we come to the Four Horsemen, the most important link of all.

The four were warriors of the Nez Percé nation which inhabited the high mountain-walled valleys of inner Oregon. Some lone trapper, camping amid their forests, told them one day of the white man's God and the white man's heaven and a wonderful Book which would show them the trail to it. And they began to think about those things.

They were a strange people, these Nez Percés. Physically and mentally among the best of their race, through all their story a vein of mysticism and religious yearning runs. There was something in them, it seems, forever groping toward the light—some vague discontent with their own gods which made them eager to know more of the God in whom the white man believed. The thought of "the Book" possessed them. The trapper had told them of St. Louis on the distant Missouri,

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the great village where six thousand white men lived. It would be a journey such as none of them had ever attempted or dreamed of, a journey dark with peril. But at St. Louis the Book could be found.

So they chose four of their number to go to St. Louis and bring back the Book; and these are the Four Horsemen of this narration, surely the strangest horsemen that ever rode in the West.

Four Indian warriors seeking not scalps but the God of the Christians. Four savage "redskins" crossing two thousand miles of dangerous wilderness not to rob and burn and slay but to find Jesus of Nazareth. Four barbarians of that wronged race, which, we have been taught to believe, was composed exclusively of demons in human form, braving the hostile tribes that barred their way, the perils of flood and storm and snow and desert, to obtain the Book for their people! There is nothing in the story of the West more wonderful than this.

They reached St. Louis after many adventures. But they found there no Book that they could take back with them—there was no translation of the Bible in the Indian tongue. General Clark, in charge of Indian affairs, received them kindly but could not, or did not, help them; and sadly, in a speech of remarkable eloquence and pathos, their spokesman told Clark that they

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must now return and report the failure of their quest. Before they could start, two of the four fell ill and died, while a third perished on the homeward journey. Only one lived to return to his people in the far-off Oregon mountains and tell them that the Book could not be found.

Yet, unknown to them or to anyone, Fate had been riding with them—the destiny of Oregon and all the Great Northwest. From St. Louis word of their extraordinary mission found its way to the cities of the East and the heart of Christian America was touched. For the first time the American Christian Churches looked toward the almost unknown region beyond the Rockies. Soon the first missionaries were on their way across the Plains, and, following them, the great American emigration to Oregon began. But for the journey of those four Indian horsemen, Oregon would have remained years longer a wild unsettled region claimed by both America and England; and but for the influx of American settlers which they started, it is possible that most of our Pacific slope today would be under the British flag.¹⁵

But the chain? The chain of tragic incident and resultant drama which began with Captain Ayres and his cruel trick and led on through the massacre of the *Ton-*

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quin and her awful vengeance and through Duncan McDougall and his smallpox bottle? What have the Four Horsemen to do with the chain? Wait. . . .

Most notable of the missionaries who answered the call of the Nez Percés for light was Marcus Whitman. His name is honored and cherished in the Northwest today and many believe that when he guided the first great wagon train of nine hundred emigrants across the Rockies, he did more than any other white man to swing Oregon to the Union. Be that as it may, he labored nobly for years as a missionary among the Indians—not with the Nez Percés, as it happened, but in the neighboring Cayuse country on the upper Columbia.

Then one day disease appeared in the Cayuse tribe. Whether it was smallpox or a virulent form of measles, it spread with fearful swiftness. Whitman and his helpers did what they could, but in most cases their efforts were fruitless. Having but slight resistance to the germs brought into the country by the white settlers, the Indians died by dozens and scores.

Fate, sitting cloud-wrapped on his Oregon peak, smiles grimly and his finger points again. It points to the lodge of Tilokait, the Cayuse chief.

All around him Tilokait saw his people dying, struck down by what seemed an invisible poison in the air—

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dying so fast that in many lodges the dead lay side by side with the sick. It was thirty-five years since Duncan McDougall had threatened to uncork his smallpox bottle and destroy the red men, but that threat had never been forgotten by the tribes of the Columbia. Tilokait, whose lodge stood close to the Whitman Mission, would not believe what his terrified tribesmen were whispering. But, as more and more of them died, Tilokait believed it too.

Whitman had done what McDougall had threatened—he had uncorked a disease-bottle. Pretending to help them with his medicines, he was poisoning the air that the red men breathed. He was killing them—men, women and little children—so that the white men whom he had brought with him from the East might possess the Indians' lands. It was surely so, for only the Indians were dying of this poison in the air; the whites who contracted the disease got well.

Tilokait secretly gathered his warriors, those that were left. He must act quickly to save his stricken people. They looked to him and he could not fail them. He must strike before another disease-bottle could be uncorked. . . .

The white men hanged Tilokait and four of his principal warriors at Oregon City on June 3, 1850, for the killing of Marcus Whitman, his wife and eleven others

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at the Whitman Mission. They made war on the Cayuse nation and drove them from their lands. Already they had virtually destroyed, chiefly with rum and disease, the people of old Comcomly who had let McDougall trick him when he could have crushed the white men at a blow. Before long they took also the lands of the Nez Percés who had sent the Four Horsemen on their journey to find Jesus of Nazareth and bring back the Book.

So we return to Joseph, with whom the story began, for it was Joseph who led the Nez Percés in their brave fight. Theirs was not quite the last blow. Now and again during the next few years small bands of red men, made desperate by the plight in which they found themselves, struck blindly at the conquerors; and in the late eighteen-eighties the rumor of a new Indian messiah spread through the Western reservations and revived briefly the dream of Opechancanough, Philip and Emperor Brims. But these final and pitiful episodes, culminating in the shambles at Wounded Knee, need not be described in detail. When Joseph bowed to the inevitable, the last commanding figure passed from the scene. For this story of the Indian, Joseph's appeal to the white victors provides the perfect conclusion:

“Hear me, my chiefs!”

Notes



1. The promises made to Joseph and his people (that they would be taken to the Lapwai Reservation in their own country) were shamefully ignored. Sent first to Fort Leavenworth, then to the Indian Territory, then to the Colville Reservation in Washington—where he died in 1904—Joseph saw his Valley of Winding Waters only once again.

He was an extraordinary man in more ways than one. The reader should by all means look up Vol. cxxviii of the *North American Review* for the year 1879. In it he will find an article dictated by this unlettered Indian which is not only an exceedingly able statement of the Indian's case but perhaps as good a piece of prose writing as was published in America that year!

2. Standish's ruthless course, so different from that described in Longfellow's poem, is defended on the ground of military necessity; that is, as the only sure means of nipping in the bud a reported "conspiracy" among the Indians to seize the Wessagussett stockade. But the injured Indians, having complained and protested in vain, were amply justified in planning such a step if in reality they did plan it—which is doubtful, since the plague had reduced the Massachusetts to a mere remnant of about 40 fighting men. Mr. Charles Francis

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Adams, in his *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*, while justifying Standish's act on the ground of necessity, nevertheless calls it "a massacre and a cold-blooded one" and adds: "Had the situation been reversed, and the Indians, after similar fashion, set upon the Europeans in a moment of unsuspecting intercourse, no language would have been found strong enough to describe in the page of history their craft, their stealth and their cruelty."

3. The Indian's dream of halting or driving back the white tide was often obscured by his growing dependence upon the white man for various articles which he came to regard as indispensable—firearms, steel hatchets, trinkets, etc.; so that the dream was not universal nor continuous but flared up locally from time to time under the influence of exceptional leaders or as a result of renewed encroachments by the whites. Other frustrating factors were the intense individualism of the Indian, the fact that in general a chief had little real authority and the difficulty of securing the co-operation of different tribes against the white man, who should have been, but was not always, recognized as the enemy of all.

4. Before Philip launched his blow, he sent warnings to some of these friends advising them to remove themselves and their families from the danger zone.

5. Certain white men, having heard that young Indians "could swim naturally, like those of the brute creation," in order to test this statement deliberately overturned a canoe containing an Indian woman and her infant. The child sank to the bottom. The mother, diving for it, brought it to the surface, but it died soon afterwards. The Indian woman proved

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to be the wife of an important sachem whom, thereafter, Philip found it difficult to restrain.

6. There is no more fascinating and probably no more important figure in the story of the early American wilderness than Emperor Brims or Brim, whose Indian name may have been Hoboyetly, though this is not certainly known. Historians, largely preoccupied with events further north, have neglected him, and very few Americans today have ever heard of him. Yet he far outranks most of the famous chiefs whose names are familiar to every schoolboy, and it is quite possible that he deserves to be regarded as the ablest Indian north of Mexico of whom we have any knowledge. His importance is due not only to his effort to save America for the red man but also to the skill and success with which, for many years after the failure of that effort, he directed the policy of his people, again playing Englishman, Frenchman and Spaniard against one another and enabling the Creeks to control for many generations the balance of power in the South. See *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, by John R. Swanton; *The Southern Frontier* by Verner W. Crane; and *The Emperor Brim* (pamphlet) by Walter A. Harris of the Macon Historical Society.

7. The physical fineness of the unspoiled red man and woman is an aspect which, perhaps, should be dwelt upon in order to emphasize the value of the Indian as an American artistic theme. A great many citations could be given. The journal of Rudolph Friedrich Kurz, a Swiss artist who, from 1846 to 1852, studied and sketched Indians at several of the trading posts of the fur companies on the Missouri River, pro-

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vides some new testimony of particular interest. Here are a few excerpts:

“Forms more beautiful than those I found among the Iowa Indians I cannot imagine, though I have been accustomed during my studies from life for many years to all that is finest in the human form . . . the proud, easy bearing, as well as the natural, graceful movements that characterize the Indian. No individuals of the white race can compare with them in that regard.”

“Their [the Pottawattomies’] daughters are not as beautiful as the maidens among the Iowa; consequently not so much exposed to the temptations of the white man.”

“By the way, Quatre Ours [an Hidatsa chief] has a perfectly beautiful wife, with the most finely chiseled features that I have seen for a long time.”

“Saw today some other attractions that afford motifs for pictures. In the morning two lovely [Indian] girls were bringing water from the river. . . . An Indian sitting on a hill beside his horse, musing on the surrounding scene. He then mounted and, singing, rode away, a sombre figure sharply outlined against the horizon.”

“If Mr. Culbertson’s Indian wife had not received news of her younger brother’s having been shot by Assiniboin, I should have had a chance to study one of the most beautiful Indian women. In token of grief she had her long, lustrous black hair cut short. She would be an excellent model for a Venus, ideal woman of a primitive race.”

“All redskins who live along rivers or lake shores are always clean, because they are not only admirable swimmers but all of them—men, women and children—are passionately fond of

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that exercise. . . . It is owing to the lack of such opportunity and due to conditions only that prairie Indians are ever uncleanly."

8. There are fearful possibilities in the further exploration of this subject. The Indian believed that the white man deliberately loosed smallpox upon him and this is generally taken as another proof of how simple and ignorant the Indian was, since so terrible a crime is scarcely conceivable. Yet there are certain sinister bits of evidence, not conclusive but disturbing.

Ross Cox (*Adventures on the Columbia River*, 1832) says: "It is believed in the northwest that this disease [smallpox] was wilfully introduced by the American traders among the Indians of the Missouri as a short and easy method of reducing their numbers, and thereby destroying in a great measure their hostility to the whites. The Americans throw the blame on the French; while they in turn deny the foul imputation, and broadly charge the Spaniards as the original delinquents. Be this as it may, the disease first proceeded from the banks of the Missouri, and the British are free from having had any participation in the detestable act."

H. H. Bancroft, in his *History of the Northwest Coast*, Vol. II, p. 602, says: "Beckwourth, the negro, [J. P. Beckwourth, a mulatto, who accompanied W. H. Ashley on several of his expeditions] was accused, I do not know how justly, of wilfully sowing smallpox among the pestiferous Blackfeet, by disposing to them of certain infected articles brought from St. Louis." The Indian felt sincerely that the worst he could do was more than justified by the diabolical crimes which he believed were being committed against him.

9. The sources for Priber are few but fascinating. James

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Adair (*History of the American Indians*, published in London in 1775) is one of the most important. Adair corresponded with Priber about 1736 and was strongly attracted to him, though convinced that he was a French agent. A French voyageur, Antoine Bonnefoy, taken prisoner by the Cherokee, left an exceedingly interesting account (Mereness, *Travels in the American Colonies*) of Priber's activities. Ludovick Grant, in his *Relation*, published in the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. X, supplies part of the story. Dodsley's *Annual Register*, 1760, and a fascinating letter from Frederika printed in the *South Carolina Gazette*, August 15, 1743, supply other links and sidelights. So far as I know, the first (and only) historian to point out Priber's real purpose was Verner W. Crane, in the *Sewanee Review*, January, 1919.

It is impossible to be absolutely sure that the Indian whom Priber made Emperor was Moytoy. Grant speaks of Moytoy as head of the nation. Adair says that Priber "crowned their old Archi-magnus emperor," which might mean either Moytoy or the high-priest. Moytoy, by the way, had had previous experience as an emperor; see the extraordinary exploits of Sir Alexander Cuming, a fantastic chapter of Carolinian history. There is a possibility, too, that Priber may have landed in Georgia, before coming to Charlestown.

10. Everybody who writes about the Eastern Cherokee must acknowledge his debt to James Mooney. Here that debt is not only acknowledged but enthusiastically proclaimed.

11. In stating that the story of Tsali has "lain hidden all these years," I do not mean to imply that this is its first publication. Lanman, in his *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains*, 1849, gives a short version of it, and James Mooney, in

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his excellent *Historical Sketch of the Cherokee*, entombed in the 19th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, records the facts as given to him by William Thomas and Wasituña. Few of the present-day Indians know as much about the episode as Mooney knew, and it is mainly to his record that I am indebted here.

Thomas—William Holland Thomas, afterwards State Senator and Colonel in the Confederate Army—made the cause of the Eastern Cherokee his own after the Removal in 1838. Tsali's sacrifice made it possible for the refugees to remain in their homeland and Colonel Thomas's unceasing and unselfish efforts at Washington procured their present reservation for them. He died in 1893, at the age of nearly ninety, honored and beloved by the Eastern Band.

12. The Sand Creek massacre of 1864 when a force of seven hundred and fifty white men in uniform attacked a band of Cheyennes encamped under protection of the United States flag and killed, mutilated and scalped at least one hundred and seventy men, women and children. The exact number slaughtered will probably never be known. One estimate from a usually trustworthy source places the dead at three hundred, of whom half were women and children.

13. Many theories have been advanced as to the cause of the *Tonquin* explosion. Washington Irving's account of it in his *Astoria* has been exploded as effectually as the ship herself. The most probable theory (as Franchère notes in his narrative) is the one adopted here—that the four survivors lit a slow train before leaving the ship.

14. It is history that McDougall averted the threatened attack on the fort by calling Comcomly and the Chinooks to-

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gether, exhibiting his "smallpox bottle," and telling them that he would loose the plague among them unless they were good. The exact circumstances have not been recorded in detail. From what *is* known, I have tried to reconstruct what must have been a highly dramatic episode.

15. There are several other versions of the "Four Horsemen" episode. According to one of these, seven men started—four Nez Percés and three Flatheads—three turned back, two died in St. Louis, one perished on the homeward journey and one, a Nez Percé, reached home. Another account affirms that four Flatheads went to St. Louis in 1831, two died there, and the other two perished on the homeward journey. Still another account speaks of the four as Salish Indians—which might, if the term were not precisely used, mean either Flatheads or Nez Percés.

George Catlin, the celebrated traveler, author and artist, says (Vol. 2, page 108) that they were Nez Percés, and since Catlin actually saw the two younger men, talked with them and painted their portraits—which can be seen in his book—his testimony would seem to be conclusive. It was largely Catlin's interest in their extraordinary journey which spread their story through the East and led to the sending of Whitman and other missionaries to Oregon.

According to other accounts, the interest of the Oregon Indians in the white man's religion was first aroused by some Christian Iroquois who had settled among them and who suggested the journey to St. Louis in search of the Book.

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